

RED ANTARCTIC

**SOVIET INTERESTS IN THE SOUTH POLAR REGION
PRIOR TO THE ANTARCTIC TREATY**

1946 – 1958

BY

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(First Class Honours)
Leningrad Institute of Culture**

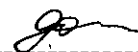
**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

University of Tasmania

October, 2009

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any tertiary institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.



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**The following papers incorporated in this thesis have been
published or are in press**

Irina Gan. 'The first practical Soviet steps towards getting a foothold in the Antarctic': Soviet Antarctic whaling flotilla *Slava*. Submitted to *Polar Record* in May 2009, accepted for publication

Irina Gan. The Soviet preparation for the IGY Antarctic program and the Australian response: politics and science. Paper prepared for the second SCAR workshop on the history of Antarctic research entitled 'Multidimensional exploration of Antarctica around the 1950s', Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, Santiago, Chile, 21 - 22 September 2006. In Press in the Chilean Antarctic Institute, Chile

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Irina Gan. Assault on the interior. Establishing the IGY Soviet Antarctic inner continental stations. In Press: a chapter in a book by Barr, S. (Ed) *From Pole to Pole*. Vol 1. Springer Press, Germany

Irina Gan. 'Will the Russians abandon *Mirny* to the penguins after 1959... or will they stay?' *Polar Record* 45 (233): 167-175 (2009)

Irina Gan. Soviet Antarctic plans after the IGY: Changes in Policy. In Press in *Polar Record*, doi: 10.1017/S0032247.409008456

I confirm that I am the sole author of these papers.



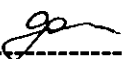
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ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that in 2006 Russia celebrated the golden jubilee of uninterrupted research on the Antarctic continent, there has been no attempt to examine the history of Soviet interest in the Antarctic in the English language. While Russian authors have written histories of Soviet Antarctic expeditions based on expedition reports, this study analyses Russian and Australian archival material, most of which has not been accessed before.

After the end of World War II, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics providentially acquired a complete German whaling flotilla as war reparations. From the time of the flotilla's first whaling operations in the Southern Ocean, a physical Soviet presence in the Antarctic was assured. The later US proposal for a solution to conflicting Antarctic territorial claims which attempted to exclude Soviet participation and the proposal of scientists for an International Geophysical Year (IGY) in 1957 - 1958 not only stimulated Soviet resolve to obtain a foothold on the icy continent, but provided the opportunity to do so.

The main body of the study deals with Soviet political and logistical preparations for their IGY operations in Antarctica and their thrust into the interior of the continent to establish observatories, all situated in the Australian Antarctic Territory. In a time of Cold War tensions and unresolved Antarctic claims, the Anglo-American world (and the Australian government in particular) was especially wary of Soviet intentions. In the final months of the IGY, the political and scientific future of the Antarctic was being shaped, with new proposals for an international Antarctic regime and proposals for continuation of Antarctic research being discussed. This study explores the thinking of political and scientific decision makers that helped mould Soviet Antarctic policy during this time and demonstrates that the two perspectives did not necessarily coincide. Whatever the divergences of opinion, the evidence indicates that from the day the Soviets set foot on the Antarctic continent, they had no intention of leaving.

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List of Abbreviations

AARI	Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute
AAD	Australian Antarctic Division
AAT	Australian Antarctic Territory
AINA	Arctic Institute of North America
ANARE	Australian National Research Expedition
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand and United States
ARI	Arctic Research Institute
ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organization
AT	Antarctic Treaty
ATS	Antarctic Treaty System
AWC	Air War College (USA)
AWF	Antarctic Whaling Flotilla
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSAGI	Comité Spécial de l'Année Géophysique Internationale
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
DEA	Department of External Affairs
Glavsevmorput	Directorate of the Northern Sea Route, the department in the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet responsible for the Soviet Arctic and logistical support of the Soviet Antarctic expeditions
ICSU	International Council of Scientific Unions
IGC	Year of Geophysical Cooperation (1 January - 31 December 1959)
IGY	International Geophysical Year (1 July 1957 - 31 December 1958)
IMO	International Meteorological Organization
IPY	International Polar Year
IUGG	International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics
RAE	Russian Antarctic expedition
Roshydromet	Federal Service of Russia for Hydrometeorology and Monitoring of the Environment
SAE	Soviet Antarctic expedition
SCAR	Special Committee for Antarctic Research (till 1957); Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (from 1957)
VGO	All-Union Geographical Society
TASS	Telegraphic Agency of the Soviet Union
VNIRO	All-Union Research Institute of Marine Fishery and Oceanography

INTRODUCTION

*'Half of Antarctica is rapidly turning from white to red...'*¹

For half a century Antarctica has been governed by a set of international institutions that, collectively, is known as the Antarctic Treaty System. At the centre of this System is the Antarctic Treaty that was signed on 1 December 1959 and, subsequently, entered into force on 23 June 1961.

The Antarctic Treaty was negotiated by twelve countries whose representatives sought to solve an international dispute concerning the southernmost region of the world. Known at the time as the Antarctic Problem, the dispute centred on overlapping sovereignty claims to Antarctic territory; the non-recognition by some countries, including the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), of these claims; and attempts by some countries to exclude the USSR from participating in any international decision making about Antarctica and, later, at the prospect of its penetration of, and on-going presence in the region. This dispute had gathered pace during the 1940s and 1950s, and in the years directly preceding the International Geophysical Year (IGY) of 1957 - 1958 and prior to the signing of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959, Antarctica itself had become 'the centre of a many-nationed activity on a scale far beyond what had ever been seen before.'² All of these developments and Antarctic activity occurred against the background of an evolving Cold War.

The Antarctic Treaty has turned out to be an unmitigated success if measured against its goal of ensuring that Antarctica is used for peaceful purposes only (*Antarctic Treaty: Article I*). The USSR was an active participant in the negotiation of the Antarctic Treaty following an invitation by United States President Eisenhower on 2 May 1958, to confer with eleven other directly interested countries to ensure that Antarctica would not 'become an object of political conflict.'³ Yet

¹ *Missiles and Rockets* June 1959 cited in Burke, D. 1994. Moments of terror. The story of Antarctic aviation. Kensington, NSW: NSW University Press: 310 (note 23).

² Bertram, G.C.L. 1957. *Antarctic prospect* (Reprinted from *International Affairs* 33 (2) April 1957). London: Royal Institute of International Affairs: 143.

³ Text of the Presidential invitation is reprinted in the *Department of State Bulletin*, XXXVIII, 988 (June 2, 1958): 911-912.

little is known about the Soviet interest in Antarctica during the 1940s and 1950s prior to the signing of the Treaty.

What were the prevailing motives for Soviet interests in the Antarctic during this period? Why did the USSR consider them significant? How did it go about pursuing them? It is the central aim of this thesis is to address these questions. The timeframe of the thesis is restricted to the years 1946 to 1958, i.e. the period after the Allied victory in World War II until the beginning of, but not including, the negotiations leading to the signing of the Antarctic Treaty. It is a time in Antarctic history when the USSR was able to achieve a physical presence in a part of the world which was the subject of sometimes conflicting, internationally ambiguous and largely unrecognized territorial claims.

An analysis of the motives which guided large scale multinational activities in the Antarctic is provided by Dr. George Colin Lawder Bertram, the Director of the Scott Polar Research Institute from 1949 till 1956 in his article entitled 'Antarctic Prospect' which appeared in the journal *International Affairs* in 1957.⁴ Bertram postulates that five chief motives were responsible for the vast increase of interest and activity by certain countries in the South Polar region:

1. The adventurous motive, which includes 'curiosity, courage, the search for knowledge and new lands, dissatisfaction with the familiar, excitement, the desire to be first, the desire to help one's nation.'⁵
2. The economic motive, which relates mainly to the sealing and whaling industry, although '[a]nother aspect of the economic motive is the desire to ensure that a rival nation shall not gain control of what might be valuable one day, even though its very existence is unknown as yet.'⁶

⁴ Bertram, G.C.L. 1957. *Antarctic prospect* (Reprinted from *International Affairs* 33 (2) April 1957). London: Royal Institute of International Affairs: 143 – 153; Bertram was also an Honorary Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society and Chairman of its Expedition's Committee for a decade.

⁵ Ibid, 143.

⁶ Ibid, 144.

3. The scientific motive, which includes both fundamental and applied research, 'is a powerful force with many educated people and nations',⁷ especially during the IGY, during which there was a special emphasis on research in Antarctica.
4. The political motive, which 'is easier to appreciate than to define, but its strength is great. National prestige and national pride are factors in a greater whole: so is the desire not to be backward while others advance.'⁸ Bertram believed that the political motives in Antarctica were 'concerned with the maintenance, the new establishment, or the upsetting, of claims to territory.'⁹ He also recognized that scientific and political aims are by no means separate, since '[t]here are scientists who appreciate that Governments will provide funds for science even though they may not be motivated by science. Likewise there are political people who fully recognize that political ends may be achieved under a scientific cloak.'¹⁰
5. The strategic motive, which at the time concerned the importance of the Drake Passage for potentially controlling sea navigation between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. It also had a bearing on the possibility of developing trans-Antarctic air routes.¹¹

Bertram's analysis provides a helpful perspective for examining the particular instance of Soviet activities in the Antarctic. As is the case with all other countries with Antarctic interests, Soviet Antarctic policy was governed to a greater or lesser degree by all five of the chief motives outlined above, although, as this thesis will demonstrate, the political motive was predominant. The USSR's status as a post World War II 'superpower'; the concomitant notion of Soviet national prestige; and

⁷ Bertram, G.C.L. 1957. *Antarctic prospect* (Reprinted from *International Affairs* 33 (2) April 1957). London: Royal Institute of International Affairs: 144.

⁸ Ibid. 144 - 145.

⁹ Ibid, 146.

¹⁰ Ibid, 146.

¹¹ Ibid, 147.

the political imperative to prove the superiority of the socialist system in a world of conflicting ideologies and Cold War tensions, all dictated that its influence extend to the far corners of the Earth. The fortuitous opportunity to extend its influence to a far (and at the time contentious) corner of the Earth, the South Polar region, was provided by the acquisition of an Antarctic whaling flotilla as war reparations from Germany. Additional Soviet motives, such as the economic and strategic potential of the Antarctic and the post war progress of science in the USSR ensured that the Antarctic could not but become an arena for concerted Soviet interest. After a hiatus of 127 years, when last their compatriots had visited the South Polar region, the Soviets had the motivation and the means to secure a physical presence in the Antarctic. This study examines the USSR's motives in relation to the Antarctic and the progressive stages that resulted in a sizeable presence in the South Polar region. It demonstrates that the Soviets viewed their objectives as ongoing and permanent. The study also investigates how Soviet Antarctic activity was perceived by countries such as Australia, which saw such activity as a threat not only to Australian Antarctic aspirations, but to its own national security.

This persistent activity, though varying in intensity from year to year, has continued for many decades. In 2006, Russia celebrated the 60th anniversary of the commencement of whaling operations and the 50th anniversary of uninterrupted Soviet/Russian research in the Antarctic.¹² These noteworthy anniversaries have stimulated a resurgence of Russian interest in the early period of Soviet activities on the icy continent. The Whalers' Society held a commemorative convention of seafarers from the Antarctic Whaling Flotilla (AWF) *Slava* and AWF *Sovetskaya Ukraina* in Odessa from 25 - 26 November 2006, while the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute hosted a 'Russia in the Antarctic' conference in St Petersburg from 12 - 14 April 2006. The conference was co-chaired by the Deputy Director of the Russian Hydro Meteorological Service Aleksandr Frolov and the Director of the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences Vladimir Kotlyakov and has published an anthology of conference proceedings.¹³

¹² For the purposes of this study, the terms USSR/Soviet refer to the period 1917 – 1991. The term Russia refers to either the pre – 1917 Russian Empire or the post – 1991 Russian Federation.

¹³ *Rossiia v Antarktike*. Nauchnaya konferentsiya k 50-letiyu nachala regul'yarnih issledovaniy Antarktiki Rossiyskimi (Sovetskimi) ekspeditsiyami [*Russia in Antarctica*. Scientific conference dedicated to 50th Anniversary of regular research in Antarctica by Russian (Soviet) expeditions], St Petersburg, Russia, 12 – 14 April 2006. St Petersburg: AARI, 230 p.

The anniversaries did not go unreported in the wider Russian media: various newspapers and magazines have published articles and interviews with the participants of the first expeditions. For example, journalist Vladimir Strugatskiy has interviewed Antarctic veterans and written on Soviet Polar history in the St Petersburg newspaper *Smena*.¹⁴ The geographer Vyacheslav Markin from Moscow has profiled the biographies and scientific contributions of prominent Polar scientists in the *Earth and Universe* magazine, published jointly by the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Society of Astronomy and Geodesy.¹⁵ The Director of the Russian Antarctic expedition, Valery Lukin, together with Nikolai Kornilov and Nikolai Dmitriev has published a reference book entitled *Soviet and Russian Antarctic expeditions - facts and figures (1955 – 2005)*;¹⁶ and the head of the Department of Polar Geography at the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute, Lev Savatyugin, and his assistant Marina Preobrazhenskaya have published two volumes on Russian research in the Antarctic encompassing the period from 1955 to 1986, based essentially on expedition reports.¹⁷ Savatyugin completed the third volume alone¹⁸ and followed it with a further work, *Russian Science in the Antarctic*, which reviews Russian scientific research on the icy continent from 1956 to 2004.¹⁹ His latest manuscript on the history of research at *Vostok* station (situated on the South

¹⁴ Strugatskiy, V. 2006. Polusa Vladimira Hodireva [the Poles of Vladimir Hodirev]. *Smena*, St Petersburg, 20-21 February: 6, 10.

¹⁵ Markin, V. 1993. Otkrytiya kak nagrada [Rewarding discoveries]. *Zemlia i Vselennaya (Earth and Universe)* 5: 61-66; Markin, V. 2006. Polveka Rossiiskih rabot v Antarktide [A half century of Russian research in Antarctica]. *Zemlia i Vselennaya (Earth and Universe)* 4: 11.

¹⁶ Lukin, V., N. Kornilov and N. Dmitriev 2006. *Sovetskiye i Rossiiskie Antarkticheskiye ekspeditsii v tsifrah i faktah (1955-2005) [Soviet and Russian Antarctic expeditions – facts and figures (1955 – 2005)]*. St Petersburg: AARI, 456p.

¹⁷ Savatyugin, L. and M. Preobrazhenskaya 1999. *Rossiiskie issledovaniya v Antarktike. Tom I, 1 – 20 SAE [Russian research in the Antarctic. Vol. I, 1 – 20 SAE]*. St Petersburg: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press), 337 p.; Savatyugin, L. and M. Preobrazhenskaya. 2000. *Rossiiskie issledovaniya v Antarktike. Tom II, 21 – 30 SAE [Russian research in the Antarctic. Vol II, 21 – 30 SAE]*. St Petersburg: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press), 387 p.

¹⁸ Savatyugin, L. 2001. *Rossiiskie issledovaniya v Antarktike. Tom III, 31 – 40 RAE [Russian research in the Antarctic. Vol III, 31 – 40 RAE]*. St Petersburg: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press), 334 p.

¹⁹ Savatyugin, L. 2004. *Rossiiskaya nauka v Antarktike [Russian science in the Antarctic]*. Moscow: Gorodets, 303 p.

Geomagnetic Pole) tentatively entitled *The Pole of Cold*²⁰ is still awaiting publication.

However, there is a dearth of contemporary English language publications based on Russian language sources investigating the Soviet interest in Antarctica prior to and during the International Geophysical Year. In 1956, Peter Toma used Russian language publications on jurisprudence as sources for his study, the 'Soviet Attitude towards the Acquisition of Territorial Sovereignty in the Antarctic', which appeared in *The American Journal of International Law*, as did Boleslaw Boczek in 'The Soviet Union and the Antarctic Regime' published in 1984 in the same journal. English language literature on the topic subsequent to Toma's and Boczek's studies refer in the main to translations of newspaper and magazine articles and books such as J. Smuul's *Antarctica Ahoy* (1961),²¹ E. Suzyumov's *A Life given to the Antarctic* (1968),²² A. Nudelman's *Soviet Antarctic expeditions 1955 – 1959* (1966)²³ and N. Gvozdetzki's *Soviet geographical explorations and discoveries* (1974).²⁴ In 1962, John Hanessian compiled 'A select bibliography of the Polar regions', which includes literature in Russian on both the North and South Polar regions.²⁵ More recently, in 2008, Rip Bulkeley has written a paper for the *Russian Journal of Earth Sciences* entitled 'Aspects of the Soviet IGY' with references to Russian documents.²⁶

There remains, however, no comprehensive examination of the early period of Soviet activities in the Antarctic based on a wide cross section of primary sources in either Russian or English. This gap in knowledge has inspired the author of this

²⁰ Savatyugin, L. 2007. *Polus holoda [Pole of Cold]*. Unpublished manuscript (copy in possession of author).

²¹ Smuul, J. 1961. *Antarctica ahoy! The ice book*. Moscow: Foreign languages publishing house, 309 p.

²² Suzyumov, E. 1968. *A Life given to the Antarctic*. Adelaide: Libraries Board of S.A., 60 p.

²³ Nudelman, A. 1966. *Soviet Antarctic expeditions 1955-1959*. Jerusalem: Israel Program for scientific translations, 138 p.

²⁴ Gvozdetzki, N. 1974. *Soviet geographical explorations and discoveries*. Moscow: Progress, 344 p.

²⁵ Hanessian, J. 1962. A select bibliography of the Polar regions. *Polar area series* II (1): 21-24.

²⁶ Bulkeley, R. 2008. Aspects of the IGY. *Russian Journal of Earth Sciences* (<http://elpub.wdcb.ru/journals/rjes>)

study to utilize her knowledge of the Russian language to bring to light sources that were previously unknown to the reader with no knowledge of Russian. Both Russian and English primary and secondary sources were drawn upon to investigate the Soviet interest in the Antarctic over the period from the first whaling expedition, through the IGY to the beginning of negotiations prior to the signing of the Antarctic Treaty in 1959.²⁷

The research incorporated primary research in Russian institutions:

- *The National Library of Russia*, St Petersburg (rare book collection dedicated to Russian/Soviet interest in South polar regions)
- *Library of the Arctic and Antarctic Museum*, St Petersburg
- *Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute (AARI)*, Library and special collection (stations leaders' reports), St Petersburg
- *Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg Branch* (File 804, the 'Lev Berg' collection)
- *Central State Archives of scientific and technical documentation*, St Petersburg (file 369 of Main Directorate of the Hydro-meteorological Service, Council of Ministers, with its vast collection of reports, decrees, scientific results, working plans, correspondence, excerpts from protocols and IGY documents)
- *Russian State Economics Archives*, Moscow, (file 9570 of the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet and its Directorate of the Northern Sea Route (*Glavsevmorput* in Russian) which includes correspondence between the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences and the AARI relating to the Soviet preparations for the first Soviet Antarctic expedition and the IGY)
- *Russian State Archives of Film and Photo Documents*, Krasnogorsk, Moscow region (SAE, IGY and other Antarctic related matters)
- *Russian State Archives of Contemporary History*, Moscow (File 475 of the Political Administration of Glavsevmorput, Council of Ministers, which includes

²⁷ The other significant Soviet achievement during the IGY, the launching of Sputnik, the first satellite to orbit the Earth in outer space, is not dealt with in this thesis. For works on Sputnik, see for example: Bulkeley, Rip. *The Sputniks Crisis and Early United States Space Policy: A Critique of the Historiography of Space*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991; Launius, R.; Logsdon, J. and Smith, W. (Ed) 2002. *Reconsidering Sputnik: forty years since the Soviet satellite*. London: Routledge.

correspondence with the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union)

In Australia research was undertaken at the:

- *National Archives of Australia* (NAA), Canberra: Correspondence files A1838, documents relating to Soviet interest in Antarctica and how the Australian government responded to that interest
- *South Australian Museum, Mawson collection*, Adelaide: File 23 DM 'Russians', documents relating to Douglas Mawson and the Russians in 1956 - 1957
- *Library of the Australian Antarctic Division* (AAD), Kingston, Tasmania. At the AAD Library's filing cabinet collection there are reports and photographs of Australian visits to Soviet stations and newspaper clippings. The Russian book, periodicals and map collection held at the AAD Library had its beginning in the early 1950s due to exchange between the Soviet libraries (mainly the Fundamental Library on the Social Sciences of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and Soviet Committee on Antarctic Research – through SCAR Working Group on Cartography) and the Division of National Mapping, Department of National Development in Canberra. The collection was later augmented by the efforts of the Director of the AAD, Philip Law, who asked the Australian Embassy in Moscow to purchase all published reports of USSR Antarctic operations. Further material was sent from the USSR as a consequence of the Antarctic Treaty's obligation to freely exchange information. Personal exchanges of publications between Soviet and Australian scientists were also a source of materials for the AAD library up until the breakup of the USSR in 1991
- *The AAD Multimedia collection*, Kingston, Tasmania. Its vast collection of photographs, films and videos helped visualize the personalities and circumstances of various meetings that occurred between Australian and Soviet expeditioners in the 1950s.

The archival material mentioned above was supplemented by meetings with participants of the Soviet/Russian and Australian Antarctic programmes. These were the primary sources, which were supported by secondary published material. The visual sources used in this thesis (photographs, maps, drawings, paintings and other figures) are further means of revealing the evolution of Soviet policies regarding

Antarctica and the principal decision-makers responsible for them. They add a human dimension to the evolution of government policy and the rationale behind it. Certain individuals, their political perceptions as influenced by their special interests and the ways in which they reacted to various events were largely responsible for determining the evolution of Soviet Antarctic policy during that era. The photographs and figures serve as pieces of evidence for helping unravel the Soviet Union's Antarctic puzzle during the specified period. The maps are valuable for illustrating the progressive march of the Soviet Union's basing operations toward the inner continental regions as the IGY progressed. They also hint at the creeping presence of the USSR in Antarctica, which the Western governments saw as slowly crawling across and extending their influence over the continent.

The difficulty of conducting research in the Russian archives is that they are all administered by different agencies: researchers must make written application for access to each individual archive, indicating the researcher's home institution and research topic. Permission to use the archives may arrive within several days or several weeks – or, alternatively, permission may be denied. Almost all the archives from which permission was sought granted access to their records. The exception was the Archives of the Foreign Politics of the Russian Federation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow, which refused access on the grounds that it 'is not in possession of material on the topic that interests you which can be accessed in the reading room.'²⁸ This denial of access was disappointing, insofar as one of the goals of this study, namely, to examine the Soviet input into the Antarctic Treaty negotiations, could not be fulfilled. Access to Russian libraries was not difficult, except for the Library of the Russian Geographical Society, St Petersburg, where access to its library catalogue is a privilege reserved for members only. In the later stages of this study, information regarding the role of the Arctic Research Institute Director Victor Buinitskiy and his plans for an expedition South soon after the World War II (some ten years earlier than the IGY) became available. Given additional time and an opportunity to pursue study in Russia, a profitable direction for further research would be to investigate these plans by locating Buinitskiy's personal documents, diaries and research plans.

²⁸ Mozzhuhina, N. 2007. Fax from the the Archives of the Foreign Politics of the Russian Federation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Moscow, 23 April 2007.

The study was approached chronologically and written as a series of separate papers covering various aspects of Soviet Antarctic activities during the designated period. It highlights the consecutive steps taken by the USSR to consolidate its presence in the South Polar region and thereby eventually achieve its aim of becoming an active participant in contributing to a decision on the future of the Antarctic. During the course of my research, I was able to share my findings with others interested in Antarctic history by presenting papers at the annual Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) Workshops on the History of Antarctic Research.²⁹ The editor of the *Polar Record*, Ian Stone, has also encouraged the author to share the fruits of her studies by contributing to the Scott Polar Research Institute's peer reviewed journal.

Chapter 1, however, has not been submitted for publication, since its purpose is to give a general historical overview of Russian and Soviet, mostly speculative, interest in the Antarctic. It mentions Bellingshausen's Antarctic expedition of 1819 - 1821 and briefly reviews the waxing and waning Russian interest in the Antarctic up until the conclusion of World War II.

Chapter 2 deals with the acquisition by the USSR of a German Antarctic whaling flotilla after World War II and the opportunity this provided for the Soviets to achieve a physical presence in the South Polar region. This event marked the beginning of Soviet whaling in the Southern Ocean and was the first practical step towards the USSR gaining a foothold in the Antarctic.

Chapter 3 examines the role of Soviet scientists in overcoming political differences in their efforts at international cooperation to achieve the scientific objectives of the IGY. The first composite Soviet Antarctic expedition was sent to Antarctica in 1955 to establish a research station in preparation for the IGY. The presence of the USSR on the Australian Antarctic Territory was of particular concern for the Australian government. Notwithstanding the Australian concerns, the Soviets managed to establish themselves in the Antarctic and thus ensured that they would be included in any further negotiations for an Antarctic regime.

²⁹ At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile in Santiago in September 2006; the Byrd Polar Research Center in Columbus, Ohio in October 2007; the SCAR/ International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) Open Science Conference in St Petersburg, Russia in July 2008.

Chapter 4 reconstructs the voyage of the Soviet expedition ships to Antarctica and back to Leningrad. In a time of Cold War tensions and unresolved Antarctic claims, the Australian and New Zealand governments were wary of Soviet intentions and barely tolerated the visits by Soviet vessels. However, in their interactions with Australians and New Zealanders, the Soviet scientists were careful to underline the friendly nature of their visits and avoided any sensitive political questions.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 trace the preparatory steps taken by the Soviet Antarctic pioneers in their attempt to reach and establish scientific bases in the most remote locations of Antarctica. National prestige and the desire to reap a rich scientific harvest were the forces driving the Soviet expedition in its quest to establish stations deep in the Antarctic interior in preparation for research to be carried out during the IGY.

Chapter 7 examines the Soviet responses to initiatives of international scientific institutions for post - IGY collaborative research in the Antarctic through to the formation of the Special Committee for Antarctic Research (SCAR) and the year of International Geophysical Cooperation (IGC) as an extension of the IGY. It demonstrates the consistently positive attitudes of the USSR to these initiatives and the steps that were taken at the national level to ensure the continuation of international collaboration.

Chapter 8 explores the thinking of both political and scientific figures in the USSR that helped mould Soviet Antarctic policy during the final months of the IGY. It demonstrates that the two perspectives did not always coincide, although the overall strategy with regard to a Soviet presence in the Antarctic remained consistent.

HISTORICAL PRELUDE

As mentioned in the Introduction, the purpose of this chapter is to give a general, though by no means comprehensive, historical overview of Russian and Soviet interest in the Antarctic from the time when Russian science first speculated on the possibility the existence of a Southern continent until the end of World War II.

Russian interest in the Antarctic can be traced back to the development of modern scientific thought in the Russian Empire, which was stimulated by reforms instigated by Tsar Peter the Great (1672 - 1725). The Tsar's policy of 'introducing foreign technical ideas into Russia' and 'making them the basis of a new state-sponsored type of education' had resulted, shortly after his death, in the establishment in St Petersburg of the first institute of secular scientific learning, the Russian Academy of Sciences.³⁰

In the mid 1730s, the director of the Academy 'requested that a number of well-trained Russian students be transferred from theological academies for scientific training at the gymnasium of the academy.'³¹ One of this small group of students was Mikhail V. Lomonosov (1711 - 1765), who went on to study at the University of Marburg in Germany, where he 'acquired not only the scientific training which enabled him to become a pioneer in the field of physical chemistry, but also a fascination with the institution of a university hitherto nonexistent in Russia. Upon his return, he immersed himself in the scientific activities of the St. Petersburg Academy, and also helped found Moscow University.'³² Lomonosov's interests were varied and multifaceted; his scientific investigations both practical and theoretical. In 1763, he sent his treatise entitled 'A brief description of various voyages on the northern seas and the possibility of a route through the Siberian ocean to the East Indies' to the president of the Russian Admiralty and proposed that Empress

³⁰ Billington, J. 1970. *The Icon and the Axe. An interpretive History of Russian Culture*. New York: A Division of Random House: 214.

³¹ Ibid, 216.

³² Ibid, 216.

Catherine II give royal assent to an expedition to the northern high latitudes. Catherine was intrigued by the suggestion and ordered that the Admiralty bring it to fruition. In 1764 three corvettes under the command of Vasiliy Chichagov, Nikifor Panov and Vasiliy Babayev were fitted out in the city of Arkhangelsk and sailed north to latitude 80° 26' N before being stopped by ice.³³

Lomonosov's interest in the Polar regions, however, was not limited to the northern high latitudes. In his treatise 'On the Earth's Layers' (§ 29) which was published in 1763, he postulated the existence of a land mass in the South Polar region. He wrote that: 'approximately 53° South, across from the Cape of Good Hope near the Straits of Magellan, giant icebergs are to be found, so there is no doubt that at a further distance one would find islands and a larger landmass which are covered by immense and perpetual snows and that more of the earth's surface is covered by them in the area of the South Pole than the North.'³⁴ Although Lomonosov had proposed and indeed helped organize an expedition to the Arctic, he never went as far as suggesting a voyage to explore the Southern high latitudes to confirm his theories of a southern landmass.

Instead, it was the British Admiralty that sent its own Captain James Cook in July 1772 with instructions for 'prosecuting [his] discoveries as near to the South Pole as possible.'³⁵ After this, his second voyage, where he went 'further south than any man', Cook had been unable to prove the existence of such a landmass, though his voyage was recognized as an exceptional achievement. In fact, the chairman of the scientific committee of the Russian Ministry of Naval Affairs, Login I. Golenishchev-Kutuzov (1769 - 1846), was so impressed by Cook's exploits that he

³³ Shirokorad, A. 2008. *Bitva za Russkuyu Arktiku XVI-XXI vv. [Battle for the Russian Arctic XVI – XXI]*. Moscow: Veche: 80-81.

³⁴ Lomonosov, M. 1954. O sloyah zemnih [On the Earth's Layers]. In: Lomonosov, M. *Polnoe sobranie sochineniy, tom 5. Trudy po mineralogii, metallurgii i gornomu delu (1741-1763) [Complete works, vol 5. Studies in mineralogy, metallurgy and mining (1741-1763)]*. Moscow: AN SSSR (Academy of Sciences Press): 543; see also Gakkel, Y. 1961. Lomonosov i Antarktika [Lomonosov and Antarctica]. *Informatsionniy Bulletin Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi Expeditsii (Information bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic expedition)* 25: 5-7.

³⁵ McGonigal, D. and L. Woodworth (Ed). 2001. *Antarctica. The complete story*. Noble Park: The Five Mile Press: 388.

translated 'A Voyage towards the South Pole and Round the World' into Russian and published it in five parts from 1796 to 1800.³⁶

The turn of the century also happened to be a time of rapid progress in Russian seafaring prowess, with several circumnavigations of the globe to its credit. The first was undertaken by Ivan Th. Kruzenstern (1770 - 1846) and Yuri Th. Lisianskiy (1773 - 1837) in the *Nadezhda* and *Neva* (1803 - 1806); then Vasilii M. Golovnin (1776 - 1831) in the *Diana* (1807 - 1809); Mikhail P. Lazarev (1788 - 1851) in the *Suvorov* (1813 - 1816) and Otto E. Kotzebue (1787 - 1846), in the brig *Rurik* (1815 - 1818). Upon the return of the latter expedition to St Petersburg, its organizer, Chancellor Nikolai P. Rumyantsev (1754 - 1826) was visited by the Emperor Aleksander I (1777 - 1825) and the Minister of Naval Affairs, the Marquis de Traversey (1754 - 1830). Rumyantsev made the point that: 'Scientific expeditions are extremely costly. However, we should not forget that the strength of the state is in its science. At the present time, there are two questions that preoccupy the geographers' world: is there a northern passage linking the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and is there a continent at the South Pole?' Aleksander asked: 'Do you consider that this is something that should be done by Russia?' To which he received the reply: 'If that should eventuate, then to the glory of conquering Napoleon Bonaparte will be added the glory of Russia as a mighty sea power!'³⁷

1.1 The first Russian Antarctic expedition

After having this conversation, it did not take long for the Emperor to act. On 25 March 1819 the Minister of Naval Affairs announced that His Imperial Majesty had been pleased to order the dispatch of two expeditions on voyages of discovery: one to the Antarctic (known as the First Squadron), and the other to the Arctic regions (the Second Squadron).³⁸ The first Russian circumnavigator, Kruzenstern, who was advising de Traversey about the planned expeditions, in his note of 31

³⁶ Slevich, S. 1965. K voprosu o redaktirovanii knigi-dnevnik Bellingshausena [Editing Bellingshausen's diary]. *Informatsionnyy Bulletin Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii* (Information bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic expedition): 52: 63.

³⁷ Quoted in Strugatskiy, V. 2006. Chya zhe ona, Antarktida? [To whom does Antarctica belong?] *Smena*, St Petersburg, 14 February: 10.

³⁸ Debenham, F. (Ed). 1945. *Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen to the Antarctic Seas, 1819-1821*. Translated from the Russian. Vol. I-II. London: Hakluyt Society: 5.

March 1819, advocated that the expedition leave as soon as practicable because 'we should not allow ourselves to be deprived of the glory of this undertaking, as it will certainly be taken by the English or the French in the near future'³⁹ and suggested Golovnin as commander of the First Squadron. Golovnin, however, was on a voyage circumnavigating the globe. The alternate candidate was Baron Thaddeus Bellingshausen, who had previously served under Kruzenstern on the latter's voyage of 1803 - 1806. Bellingshausen was appointed leader of the expedition and Lieutenant Mikhail Lazarev was appointed second in command.

Two sloops, the 985 ton *Vostok* (under the command of Bellingshausen) and the 884.5 ton *Mirny* (under the command of Lazarev) set out from Kronstadt on 3 July 1819 (Julian calendar) / 15 July (Gregorian calendar) with the aim of making every effort 'to approach as closely as possible to the South Pole, searching for as yet unknown land, and only abandoning the undertaking in the face of insurmountable obstacles.'⁴⁰ The Second Squadron under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Mikhail Vasiliev and Lieutenant Gleb Shishmarev was to proceed to Bering Strait, and 'having entered [it], was to look for a passage along the north of North America and, after circumnavigating it, return to Russia via the Western Ocean.'⁴¹ The voyage of the Second Squadron is beyond the scope of this work. However, Bellingshausen's Antarctic expedition, which was 'one of the greatest Antarctic expeditions on record, well worthy of being placed beside that of Cook'⁴² according to the 'highest authority on the history of Antarctic exploration, Dr. Hugh Robert Mill',⁴³ was certainly of crucial importance, not in his own lifetime, but some two centuries later. It became pivotal to the political strategy pursued by the Soviet Union

³⁹ Cited in: Shvede, E. 1949. *Pervaya russkaia Antarkticheskaia ekspeditsia* [First Russian Antarctic expedition 1819-1821]. In: Bellingshausen, F. 1949. *Dvukratnoe izyskanie v Yuzhnom Ledovitom Okeane i plavanie vokrug sveta v prodolzhenii 1819, 1820 i 1821. godov, sovershennoe na shlupah Vostok i Mirny pod nachalstvom kapitana Bellingshausena* [Two voyages in the Southern ocean and around the world in 1819-1821 undertaken on the *Vostok* and *Mirny* under the command of Captain]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 9.

⁴⁰ Debenham, F. (Ed). 1945. *Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen to the Antarctic Seas, 1819-1821*. Translated from the Russian. Vol. I-II. London: Hakluyt Society: 14.

⁴¹ Averianov, V. and Y. Koblenz, 1970. 150-letie otkrytiya Antarktidi i Sovetskiye issledovaniya v Antarktike [150th Anniversary of discovery of Antarctica and Soviet research in the Antarctic]. *Informatsionnyy Bulletin Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii* (Information bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic expedition) 77: 6.

⁴² Debenham, F. (Ed). 1945. *Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen to the Antarctic Seas, 1819-1821*. Translated from the Russian. Vol. I-II. London: Hakluyt Society: XI.

⁴³ *Ibid*, XI.

in the mid twentieth century during the time of conflicting territorial claims in the Antarctic.

Russian geopolitical considerations of the early nineteenth century, however, derived no practical advantage from what the Soviets in the twentieth century referred to as Bellingshausen's 'First Russian Antarctic expedition'. The expedition returned to St Petersburg in July 1821; although Bellingshausen's report of his voyage, edited by Golenishchev-Kutuzov, was only published in St Petersburg ten years later in 1831,⁴⁴ without generating any particular interest. Although Kruzenstern continued to show an interest in Russia's exploration in the southern latitudes (in 1829, he proposed a new plan for an expedition to follow up and expand on Bellingshausen's voyages), he met with little success in having it realized. His son, Pavel Kruzenstern (1809 - 1881), took up his father's idea. In 1833, he submitted another plan for further exploration of the Antarctic which would provide infinite benefits to science and glory to the country. His attempts were no more successful than his father's. The Russian Imperial government seemed to have lost interest in the Antarctic and never instigated any claims to its discoveries as it could see no practical economic, political or strategic benefits of doing so.

For seventy years, Bellingshausen's report was all but forgotten. Only in 1899, when the International Geographical Conference held a meeting in Berlin, which discussed proposals for Antarctic research, was Bellingshausen's voyage remembered. His report was translated into German and published in Leipzig in 1902,⁴⁵ which made it available to western readers. An English translation of the report appeared during World War I, which was read and ultimately edited by the Director of the Scott Polar Research Institute in Cambridge, Professor Frank Debenham.⁴⁶ It was published by the Hakluyt Society in London in 1945.⁴⁷ In his

⁴⁴ Belov, M. 1969. *Istoriya otkrytiya i issledovaniya* [History of discovery and exploration]. In: Tolstikov, E. (Ed.) *Atlas Antarktiki Tom II* [Atlas of Antarctica Vol. II]. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 42.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Debenham was in Scott's expedition to the South Pole, with the Scott Polar Research Institute set up as a 'memorial' to Scott. Debenham was its first director from 1925 till 1946.

⁴⁷ Debenham, F. (Ed). 1945. *Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen to the Antarctic Seas, 1819-1821*. Translated from the Russian. Vol. I-II. London: Hakluyt Society, 474 p.

introduction to *The Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen to the Antarctic Seas 1819 – 1821*, Debenham notes that Bellingshausen's 'first real reward in the discovery of new land, the island which he named after Peter the Great was the first time that land had ever been seen within the Antarctic Circle.'⁴⁸ Debenham also mentions that on 5 and 6 February, 1820 (Julian calendar) or 17 and 18 February (Gregorian calendar) Bellingshausen 'describes very clearly the appearance of land [the mainland of the Antarctic continent] without claiming it as such.'⁴⁹ Debenham goes on to point out the 'fierce controversy' that has 'of recent years ranged round'⁵⁰ the supposed priority of discovery of the Antarctic continent. Due to the almost simultaneous sightings of the continent by the Englishman naval Master Edward Bransfield, the American Captain Nathaniel Palmer, and the Russian Bellingshausen, the three countries involved were eager to claim that their seafarers were the first to discover the new continent.

It was precisely this controversy about priority of discovery that flared up again in the second quarter of the twentieth century. The Soviet Naval historian Evgeniy Evgeniyevich Shvede (1886 - 1991) wrote that 'the expansionist politics' of the Anglo-American block had 'turned its attention to Antarctica and intends to arrange a regime for that continent without the participation of the Soviet Union.'⁵¹ For this reason, the Geographical Society⁵² of the USSR spearheaded a movement to

⁴⁸ Debenham, F. (Ed). 1945. *Voyage of Captain Bellingshausen to the Antarctic Seas, 1819-1821*. Translated from the Russian. Vol. I-II. London: Hakluyt Society: XXII - XXIII.

⁴⁹ Ibid, XVIII.

⁵⁰ Ibid, XXIII.

⁵¹ Shvede, E. 1949. Predislovie redaktora [Editor's foreword]. In: Bellingshausen, F. 1949. *Dvukratnoe izyskanie v Yuzhnom Ledovitom Okeane i plavanie vokrug sveta v prodolzhenii 1819, 1820 i 1821 godov, sovershennoe na shlyupah Vostok i Mirny pod nachalstvom kapitana Bellingshausena* [Two voyages in the Southern ocean and around the world in 1819-1821 undertaken on the Vostok and Mirny under the command of Captain Bellingshausen]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 3.

⁵² The Geographical Society was founded in 1845 in St Petersburg and is the oldest non-government scientific body in Russia. It was known under different names: Russian Geographical Society 1845-1850, 1917-1926; Imperial Russian Geographical Society 1850-1917; State Geographical Society 1926-1938; Geographical Society of the USSR (1938-1992); Russian Geographical Society from 1992. The Arctic researcher, Admiral Fedor Petrovich Litke, was its first president and the Russian Antarctic explorer, Thaddeus Bellingshausen, was one of its first members. It has branches in many regions of Russia: the Moscow branch alone had 2000 members in 2008. It began publishing its bimonthly journal, *Geographicheskije izvestiya*, in 1846. During the Soviet period, the journal was named *Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo Geographicheskogo obshchestva* (News of the All Union Geographical Society), at present known as *Izvestiya Russkogo Geographicheskogo obshchestva* (News of the Russian Geographical Society).

shape Soviet public opinion by educating the public about the eminent role of Russian explorers in discovering Antarctica and the consequent 'indisputable right of the Soviet Union to participate in decisions about the Antarctic.'⁵³ Shvede, an active member of the Geographical society, prepared an updated Russian edition of Bellingshausen's narrative, which was published in 1949 with an introduction explaining the 'great political significance'⁵⁴ of the renewed interest.

1.2 The first International Polar Year

Meanwhile, in 1879, before the renewed interest in Bellingshausen's expedition, the Russian Academy of Sciences sent academician Robert E. Lents as a delegate to the first International Polar Conference in Hamburg. The conference came about as a result of the ideas of the German Arctic explorer and leader of the Austrian expedition that discovered Franz Josef Land, Karl Weyprecht (1838 - 1881),⁵⁵ who conceived of the idea of 'a series of synchronous expeditions' to the Polar regions in order to 'obtain one year's series of observations.'⁵⁶ Since this research was far too complex to be completed by any one nation, the idea of an International Polar Year (IPY) was born. The conference in Hamburg, consisting of representatives from Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Norway, Russia and Sweden, was the first of three held in order to prepare for the First IPY, which was to be conducted between August 1882 and August 1883. A second conference was held in Berne in 1880 and a third in St Petersburg in 1881 under the chairmanship of the director of the St Petersburg Geophysical Observatory, Heinrich von Wild. An International Polar Commission was formed with von Wild as

⁵³ USSR 1949. Resolution of 10 February 1949 concerning Antarctica adopted by the All-Union Geographical Society. In: Bush, W. 1982. *Antarctica and International Law. A Collection of interstate and National Documents*, vol 3. London-Rome-New York: Ocean Publications Inc.: 207.

⁵⁴ Shvede, E. 1949. Predislovie redaktora [Editor's foreword]. In: Bellingshausen, F. 1949. *Dvukrainoe izyskanie v Yuzhnom Ledovitom Okeane i plavanie vokrug sveta v prodolzhenii 1819, 1820 i 1821 godov, sovershennoe na shlyupah Vostok i Mirny pod nachalstvom kapitana Bellingshausena* [Two voyages in the Southern ocean and around the world in 1819-1821 undertaken on the Vostok and Mirny under the command of Captain Bellingshausen]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 4.

⁵⁵ Summerhayes, C. 2008. International collaboration in Antarctica: The International Polar Years, the International Geophysical Year, and the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research. *Polar Record* 44 (231): 322.

⁵⁶ Ibid: 322, 323.

president; Lents was elected president of the national Russian Polar Commission. A research plan was developed and two stations planned: one on the Sub-Antarctic South Georgia Island, and one at Cape Horn, the most southerly point of South America, although only the Germans managed to organize a station on South Georgia Island.⁵⁷

William Barr, from the Department of Geography, University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, has extensively researched Russian Arctic history. He has written about the Russian contribution to the first IPY and notes that although Russia did not plan any research in the Antarctic, it did establish two Arctic stations: one at Malye Karmakuly on Zaliv Mollera on the south island of Novaya Zemlia⁵⁸ and the other on the island Sagastyr in the Lena delta.⁵⁹ Obviously, the Russians were more interested in exploring the Arctic during the first IPY, although various individuals did not abandon the possibilities of exploring the Antarctic.

Admiral Stepan O. Makarov, for example, who also happened to be a naval architect, was one of the enthusiasts who considered the requirements for shipping in the far southern latitudes. In his note to the Admiralty dated 9 January 1897, he wrote that, unlike in the Arctic Ocean, contemporary icebreakers 'are unable to take on the mountains of ice in the Southern Polar Ocean.'⁶⁰ In early 1899, he had commissioned a powerful icebreaker, the *Ermak*, to be built in England for the Russian Navy according to his own design. While in England, Makarov was asked by the oceanographer and member of the Royal Geographical Society of Scotland, Sir John Murray, to outline his ideas of using the *Ermak* in the Baltic and Kara Seas and of exploring the Arctic Ocean. Apparently, Makarov's ideas created quite an interest: the meeting of the British Association which was discussing Scott's first Antarctic expedition suggested that an icebreaker be used for the voyage. Pinhenson quotes

⁵⁷ Belov, M. 1969. Istoriya otkrytiya i issledovaniya [History of discovery and exploration]. In: Tolstikov, E. (Ed). *Atlas Antarktiki Tom II [Atlas of Antarctica Vol. II]*. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 48.

⁵⁸ Barr, W. 1985. The Russian Expedition to Malye Karmakuly, Novaya Zemlya. In: Barr, W. *The expeditions of the first IPY, 1882-83*. Calgary: Arctic Institute of North America: 111 – 122.

⁵⁹ Barr, W. 1985. The Russian Expedition to Ostrov Sagastyr' in the Lena Delta. In: Barr, W. *The expeditions of the first IPY, 1882-83*. Calgary: Arctic Institute of North America: 82 – 110.

⁶⁰ Pinhenson, D. 1962. O Makarovskom proekte ledokola dlia Antarkticheskoi expeditzii [Makarov's project for an icebreaker for an Antarctic expedition]. *Informatsionnyi Buleten Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi Expeditzii (Information bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic expedition)* 36: 41.

Makarov writing to the vice president of the Russian Geographical Society that 'Sir John Murray asked me to come up with plans for an icebreaker for the Antarctic expedition.'⁶¹ Pinhenson considers that Makarov actually did come up with the plans for such an Antarctic icebreaker, though he, Pinhenson, was unable to locate them. Unfortunately, Makarov was killed in action when the battleship *Petropavlovsk* was blown up by a mine in March 1904 during the Russo-Japanese war when he was commander of the Pacific Ocean Squadron; his plans were apparently lost. Although Makarov's connection with plans for an icebreaker for the British Antarctic expedition was cut short, Russian ties to international Polar research initiatives continued. Three of Makarov's countrymen were sent as delegates to the First International Polar Congress in Brussels.

1.3 First International Polar Congress (1906) and Russian participants in Scott's and Amundsen's expeditions of 1910-1912

In September 1906 Mikhail Rykachev, oceanographer Yuli Shokalski and Innokenti Tolmachev attended the First International Polar Congress. The Congress was convened in order to revive the International Polar Commission, which was to direct and co-ordinate polar research, including expeditions to both the North and South Poles. The fourteen countries taking part were Argentina, Chile, Congo, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Spain, Sweden and USA. Austro-Hungary and Great Britain did not send official delegates, although they were represented by private interests. In this instance, Russia did not organise any government-assisted or private expeditions to Antarctica, but the two expeditions which were competing to reach the South Pole, the British one of Captain Robert F. Scott and the Norwegian one of Roald E. G. Amundsen included Russian participants.⁶²

Maira Dunbar, from the Defence Research Establishment of Canada, translated N. Bolotnikov's Russian article about the dog-driver Dmitriy Girev (1888 - 1932) and stable-man Anton Omelchenko (1883 - 1932), who went to Antarctica

⁶¹ Pinhenson, D. 1962. O Makarovskom proekte ledokola dlia Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii [Makarov's project for an icebreaker for an Antarctic expedition]. *Informatsionniy Bulletin Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi Ekspeditsii (Information bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic expedition)* 36: 42.

⁶² While Amundsen was always aiming for the South Pole, his public planning and information to his crew were related to an expedition to the North Pole. The race to the South Pole occurred after Scott's expedition had left the UK.

with Scott's ill-fated expedition of 1910 - 1912.⁶³ Girev was well known as one of the best dog handlers in the Lower Amur in the Russian Far East. When in 1910 Scott's assistant, Cecil Meares, came to Nikolaevsk to purchase sledge dogs for the future expedition, Girev was recommended as an excellent dog-team driver, a hardy hunter and a brave man. He assisted in purchasing the dogs for the expedition in Siberia, then transporting them from Vladivostok via Sydney to Lyttleton, New Zealand to board Scott's ship, the *Terra Nova*. Together with Meares, Girev accompanied Scott's party to 84° S, where a supply base was set up and named *Dmitrovsk* in his honour. He was in Priestley's party which ascended Mount Erebus, one of the peaks of which was named *Dmitriy Peak*. Girev experienced many dangers during the three Antarctic winters. 'More than once, he was on the verge of death. But probably his worse moment came on 12 November 1912, when taking part in the search for Scott and his party. He was one of the witnesses to the horrible discovery – the snow covered tent with the bodies of the explorers.'⁶⁴ The British government awarded him a silver medal in appreciation of his work.

Girev's compatriot, Anton Omelchenko, worked in Vladivostok as a jockey at the hippodrome. Late in 1909, he met Scott's agent, Lieutenant Wilfred Bruce, who recruited him for Scott's expedition. Omelchenko accompanied Bruce to Harbin to buy Manchurian ponies and later met up with Scott. Anton and Dmitriy took part in support parties, accompanying Scott on his way to the South Pole. They are spoken of warmly in Scott's journal; they not only worked hard and devotedly with their respective charges, but also got along very well with their British messmates.⁶⁵ 'Wednesday, 18 January 1911', Scott wrote in his diary, 'Anton and Dmitriy are always ready to help; they are both excellent fellows.'⁶⁶ 'I became convinced that our Russian boys deserve as much praise as my English fellows.'⁶⁷

⁶³ Dunbar, M. 1971. Anton and Dmitriy: Two Russian members of Scott's last expedition (From the Russian of N. Bolotnikov). *Polar Record* 15 (97): 499-502.

⁶⁴ Yuzefov, V. 1998. Northern Sakhalin to the Antarctic: the story of a Russian participation in Scott's expedition to the South Pole. 1910-1913. Translated from Russian by Ella L. Wiswell. *Polar Record* 34 (190): 253.

⁶⁵ Dunbar, M. 1971. Anton and Dmitriy: Two Russian members of Scott's last expedition (From the Russian of N. Bolotnikov). *Polar Record* 15 (97): 499-502.

⁶⁶ Bolotnikov, N. (Ed.) 1955. *Poslednyaya ekspeditsia Scotta [Scott's last expedition]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 99.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*: 163.

Aleksandr Kuchin (1888 - 1912), 'the Russian who went South with Amundsen' in 1909 - 1911 as pilot and oceanographer, was a former student of the Arkhangelsk Maritime College.⁶⁸ Being an experienced sailor, Kuchin had been accepted into the 2nd year of the College in 1904 to study oceanography. During this period he frequently worked on sealing schooners in Norway, which historically had close trade relations with Northern Russia. In 1907 at the age of 18 he published a small Russian-Norwegian dictionary containing 4000 words in the 'Pomor' publishing house in Norway, which is perhaps one of the first dictionaries of its kind. Aleksandr graduated from the College with a gold medal in 1909.

After graduating, Kuchin returned to Norway to study oceanography in Bergen under Professor Helland-Hansen, head of the Bergen biological station. During his time there, he became acquainted with the famous Norwegian Polar explorer, Fridtjof Nansen. Both Helland-Hansen and Nansen later recommended him to Roald Amundsen as an outstanding and talented oceanographer. It was for this reason that Kuchin became the sole foreigner in Amundsen's Antarctic expedition, undertaking oceanographic studies on board the *Fram*. Kuchin, in a letter dated 29 April 1910 addressed to his father and sisters in Russia, writes that he 'will try to work hard so that Amundsen will not regret taking a foreigner with him, let alone a Russian.'⁶⁹ Returning to Russia in 1912, Kuchin was recruited by the geologist and explorer Vladimir Rusanov to join him in a scientific expedition to Svalbard. As deputy leader of the party and captain of the expedition's ship *Gerkules*, Kuchin played an important role in surveying Svalbard. Unexpectedly, he found himself heading in another direction: Rusanov decided to reach Bering Strait by the North Sea route. Somewhere along the way, *Gerkules* disappeared. Her loss brought to an end the career of the promising 24 year old polar explorer Aleksandr Kuchin. The search party found the remains of the ship in the Kara Sea in 1934.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Barr, W. 1985. Aleksandr Stepanovich Kuchin: the Russian who went South with Amundsen. *Polar Record* 22 (139): 401-412.

⁶⁹ Kuchin, A. 1910. A letter dated 29 April 1910. Museum of Arkhangelsk Maritime College, Arkhangelsk, Russia.

⁷⁰ Dorozhkina, M. and E. Pavlova 2003. Zdes ih pomnili i lubili [Here they were remembered and loved]. *Severnyye prostory* 1-2: 76.

1.4 The Northern scientific/economic expedition – precursor of the Arctic Research Institute

The years following these Antarctic exploits were a time of upheaval in the Russian Empire: World War I, the February and October Revolutions of 1917 and the ensuing civil war put a damper on any scientific Polar interests. The military strategic significance of the Russian Arctic, however, was becoming increasingly apparent.⁷¹ Yuri Zhukov, in his monograph *Stalin: The Arctic Shield*, focuses on this strategic interest. Zhukov considers that it was the necessity of securing the Russian North against any foreign invader which became the driving force for the young Soviet government to turn its attention to the possibilities of a permanent naval presence on the Barents Sea and to the military and economic significance of a northern sea route.⁷² Aleksei Tryoshnikov, in his article dedicated to the 50th Jubilee of the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute, briefly discusses the increasing scientific/economic, as opposed to military interest in the Russian Arctic. On 4 March 1920, an edict of the Economic Council established the Northern scientific/economic expedition (Sevexpeditsiya) in Petrograd,⁷³ with branches in Moscow, Arkhangelsk and Vologda to which it assigned 100 million roubles.⁷⁴ Members of the Council of the scientific committee of Sevexpeditsiya were the President of the Russian Academy of Sciences academician A.P. Karpinskiy, academician A.E. Fersman, Professors N. M. Knipovich, K. M. Deryugin, Y. M. Shokalskiy and other well known scholars. Sevexpeditsiya was the precursor of the Institute for Northern Studies which was founded in 1925 and later reorganised into the All-Union Arctic Institute in 1930. The military, economic and scientific potential of the Arctic at this time was most pressing, and little, if any, thought was given to the remote Antarctic, which had negligible relevance to the needs of the young Soviet regime. At the same time, other countries such as Great Britain, Argentina, Chile and Norway were very much aware of the economic and strategic

⁷¹ The vulnerability of the Russian north was demonstrated by the Allied intervention in Arkhangelsk and Murmansk during the Russian civil war.

⁷² Zhukov, Y. 2008. *Stalin: Arktichesski Shchit [Stalin: The Arctic Shield]*. Moscow: Vagrius, 542.

⁷³ The city had different names throughout its history: St Petersburg from 1703-1914, Petrograd from August 1914 – 1924, Leningrad from January 1924-1992, St Petersburg from 1992 till the present.

⁷⁴ Tryoshnikov, A. 1970. Ordena Lenina Arkticheskomu Nauchno-issledovatel'skomu institute 50 let [50th Anniversary of the Arctic Institute]. *Problemi Arktiki i Antarktiki (Problems of the Arctic and Antarctic)* 36-37: 7 - 8.

potential of the South Polar region, and had already declared their interest. When the USSR eventually did turn its attention South, the knowledge and experience acquired in the Arctic became invaluable in pursuing its goals in the Antarctic.

1.5 The second International Polar Year

The idea for a second IPY, which would commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first IPY, was the stimulus for a renewed international (as well as Soviet) interest in both Polar regions. It was proposed by the German Leonid Breitfuss, a representative of the International Society for the Exploration of the Arctic by means of Aircraft (which had close ties to the USSR). An official proposal was later made to the International Meteorological Organization (IMO) by the German representative Vice Admiral Hugo Dominic and approved by the IMO in 1928 and by the General Assembly of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG) in 1930.⁷⁵ A new international polar commission met in Leningrad in August 1930, where twenty-six countries agreed to participate in the second IPY planned for August 1932 - August 1933.⁷⁶

A second conference was held in Innsbruck in September 1931, where one of the suggestions put forward by the explorer George Hubert Wilkins (1888 - 1958) was to use a submarine to reach the higher southern latitudes.⁷⁷ Scientists from the All-Union Arctic Institute were also keen to reach the southern latitudes, but using a different mode of transport: they knew that in the northern summer of 1931, the Kamchatka Stock Company (in the Soviet Far East) was in the process of establishing a whaling flotilla, which proposed to commence whaling operations in the Southern Ocean.⁷⁸ The company apparently purchased 'a one-time American ship that had been converted in Leningrad',⁷⁹ renamed it *Aleut*, and transitioned it from

⁷⁵ Summerhayes, C. 2008. International collaboration in Antarctica: The International Polar Years, the International Geophysical Year, and the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research. *Polar Record* 44 (231): 325.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Belov, M. 1966. Proekt pervoi Sovetskoi ekspeditsii v Antarktiku [Project of the first Soviet expedition to the Antarctic]. *Informatsionnyy Bulletin Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi Ekspeditsii* (Information bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic expedition) 58: 65.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Tønnessen, J. and A. Johnsen. 1982. *The history of modern whaling*. London: Hurst and Company: 414.

Leningrad to Vladivostok. They believed that 'it would be inexcusable not to utilise the expected voyage of the Soviet ships to Antarctic waters for all-round thorough research of the Antarctic. This scientific research would in no way conflict with the whaling activities of the voyage, but would add a solid scientific base to assist in the development of Soviet whaling in this part of the world.'⁸⁰

After the conference in Innsbruck, the Soviet Committee of the second IPY began preparations for sending an expedition to the Antarctic. M. I. Belov claims that the plans for this expedition, prepared in 1931 by a group of scientists at the All-Union Arctic Institute, was found among the papers of the first Director of the Arctic Institute and Arctic explorer Rudolf Lazarevich Samoilovich (1881 - 1939).⁸¹ The proposed leader was to be Samoilovich himself, with A. F. Laktionov and M. M. Yermolaev as his assistants. They proposed to conduct research in the region from western East Antarctica to the eastern part of the Ross Sea. Among the most important research directions were oceanographic (hydrological sections, hydro-chemical analysis, sea depth, hydro-biological samples) and glaciological, which were necessary for navigation; meteorological and atmospheric. Thorough aero surveying reconnaissance of the coast from Enderby Land eastward and a station on Peter I Island were also planned.⁸² Another aspect of the expedition was to look for coal which could be used to fuel the whaling flotilla. Importantly, the possibilities for new geographical discoveries would 'add political significance to the expedition'.⁸³

The concrete political significance would have been 'to air the Soviet claim to be considered the "rightful owner" of Peter I Island and other lands discovered in

⁸⁰ Belov, M. 1966. Proekt pervoi Sovetskoi ekspeditsii v Antarktiku [Project of the first Soviet expedition to the Antarctic] *Informatsionnyi Bulletin Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi Ekspeditsii* (Information bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic expedition): 58: 66.

⁸¹ Ibid: 64; about Samoilovich see: Koryakin, V. 2007. *Rudolf Lazarevich Samoilovich* (In Russian). Moscow: Nauka, 267 p.

⁸² Tryoshnikov, A. 1966. Desyat let Sovetskikh issledovaniy v Antarktike [Ten years of Soviet research in Antarctica]. *Problemi Arktiki i Antarktiki* (Problems of the Arctic and Antarctic) 22: 5; Later attempts to build a station on the island in 1960 proved impractical due to frequent avalanches. See: Dubinin, A. 1962. Ostrov Petra I [Peter I Island]. In: USSR 1962. *Trudy Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii. Tom 20. Chetvertiy i pyatyy reisi d/e Ob 1958-1960* [Annals of Soviet Antarctic expedition. Vol.20. Fourth and Fifth voyages of the Ob 1958-1960]. Leningrad: Morskoi Transport (Marine Transport Press): 245-251.

⁸³ Belov, M. 1966. Proekt pervoi Sovetskoi ekspeditsii v Antarktiku [Project of the first Soviet expedition to the Antarctic] *Informatsionnyi Bulletin Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi Ekspeditsii* (Information bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic expedition): 58: 66.

the region by Russian explorers at the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁸⁴ A Soviet base on Peter I Island would have been a compelling response to the first landing ever on the island on 2 February 1929 in the course of the voyage of the *Norvegia*, which claimed it for Norway. Unfortunately for Soviet political advantage (and science), this expedition was unable to be brought to fruition. Apparently, 'the government of the Union of South Africa refused to agree to render the necessary assistance to the whaling fleet, including the supply of fuel.'⁸⁵ Whatever the reasons for the failure to send an expedition to the Antarctic, the USSR was unable to assert any legal rights to Peter I Island or other lands discovered by Bellinghausen's expedition. Consequently, the USSR did not dispute Norway's claim or 'air a claim' as 'rightful owner' after King Haakon of Norway placed the island under Norwegian sovereignty on 1 May 1931.⁸⁶ In fact, Belov concedes that '[t]he only important [Antarctic] expeditions during the period of the second IPY were the expeditions of Richard Byrd and L. Christensen.⁸⁷

Although the USSR was unable to send an expedition to the Antarctic during the second IPY, its achievements in the Arctic during the same period were impressive. During the second IPY, the vessel *Aleksandr Sibiriakov* had completed the first single season voyage along the whole extent of the Northern Sea Route. Following this success, the Soviet of Peoples Commissars on 17 December 1932 established the Main Directorate of the Northern Sea Route (Glavnoye Upravleniye Severnogo Morskogo Puti – Glavsevmorput) with the aim of coordinating safe navigation in the Arctic region.⁸⁸ As well as managing the Northern Sea Route, it was to be the leading institution supporting Soviet Arctic research, assuming responsibility for the All-Union Arctic Institute. An English language account of the

⁸⁴ Wolk, S. 1958. The basis of Soviet claims in the Antarctic. *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the USSR* 5: 43 – 44.

⁸⁵ Avsyuk, G. 1984. *The Antarctic Committee Reports. Main results of twenty years' research in the Antarctic*. Washington: American Publishing Co: 2; The reason for the refusal is unclear.

⁸⁶ Norway 1931. Royal proclamation placing Peter I Island under Norwegian sovereignty, 1 May 1931. In: Bush, W. *Antarctica and International Law. A Collection of inter-state and National Documents*, vol.3. London-Rome-New York: Ocean Publications Inc: 134 – 135.

⁸⁷ Belov, M. 1969. Istoriya otkritiya i issledovaniya [History of discovery and exploration]. In: Tolstikov, E. (Ed). *Atlas Antarktiki Tom II [Atlas of Antarctica Vol. II]*. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 70.

⁸⁸ See McCannon, J. 1998. *Red Arctic. Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932-1939*. New York: Oxford University Press, 234 p.

history of the foundation of Glavsevmorput can be found in John McCannon's *Red Arctic. Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932-1939*.⁸⁹

1.6 Between the second IPY and World War II

The years immediately following the second IPY were marked by a period of escalating repressions in the USSR, where the Arctic took on a more sinister role. Vast numbers of Soviet citizens were arrested and disappeared in its icy expanses.⁹⁰ After the assassination of Sergei Kirov, the leader of the Leningrad party apparatus and member of the Politburo, by a disaffected party member, Stalin decided to eliminate any potential opponents of his regime. 'In the spring of 1935 tens of thousands of suspect Bolsheviks, Komsomoltsy,⁹¹ and their families were deported from Leningrad to northern Siberia. Multitudes of "Kirov's assassins", as those deportees were called, from other cities, too, filled prisons and concentration camps.'⁹² This was the beginning of the Great Terror. Among those caught up in the purges was Samoilovich, who was declared to be an enemy of the people in 1937: he was arrested in July 1938 and executed on 4 March 1939. Part of Samoilovich's alleged wrongdoing was his 'wasting time' on geology, which had nothing to do with the immediate matter in hand – making the sea route navigable for as long a period as possible.'⁹³ His fate echoed, to a large extent, the purge of the study of geology at the Arctic Institute. During the time that Samoilovich was being dealt with as an 'enemy of the people', however, exploration/exploitation of the Arctic was taking on a wider scope with the help of these very same 'enemies of the people', who were being used as an expendable labour force in developing the economic potential of the Soviet north. There was little mention of the Arctic exploits of these hapless

⁸⁹ McCannon, J. 1998. *Red Arctic. Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932-1939*. New York: Oxford University Press, 234 p.

⁹⁰ See Conquest, R. 1979. *Kolyma: The Arctic death camps*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 256p; Conquest, R. 1974. *Bolshoi Terror [The great terror]*. Firenze: Edition Aurora, 1064 p; Solzhenitsyn, A. 1974. *The Gulag Archipelago*. Melbourne: Wilke & Co Ltd, 660 p.

⁹¹ From: Komsomol – Komitet Sovetskoi Molodyozhy – Committee of Soviet Youth.

⁹² Deutscher, I. 1984. *Stalin. A political biography*. Revised Edition. Singapore: Richard Clay Pte Ltd: 355.

⁹³ Armstrong, T. 1958. *The Russians in the Arctic. Aspects of Soviet exploration and exploitation of the Far North, 1937-1957*. London: Methuen and Co Ltd: 164.

'enemies' in the popular press, which dwelt rather on the heroic deeds of the state endorsed explorers of the Arctic region. In February 1936, the Soviet government approved an expedition on a drifting ice station (using aviation support) to explore the North Pole and the central polar basin. This was the famous expedition known as *Severniiy Polus 1* (SP 1) or North Pole 1 of 1937 - 1938 led by Ivan D. Papanin (1894 - 1986), who was accompanied by meteorologist/astronomer E. K. Federov, hydrologist/hydro-biologist P. P. Shirshov and radio operator E. K. Krenkel (Krenkel had been the radio operator on the *Aleksandr Sibiriakov*; Shirshov had been the hydrologist/hydro-biologist).⁹⁴ On 21 May 1937, the USSR became the first nation ever to land an aircraft on the North Pole and build a base station on an ice floe.⁹⁵ The four members of the expedition drifted 1500 miles over 275 days and, according to McCannon, this 'masterful victory over the North Pole' was '[t]he USSR's greatest accomplishment in the Arctic.'⁹⁶ Success in the Arctic, however, was tempered by new Norwegian initiatives in the Antarctic.

On 14 January 1939 Norway made a move to establish its sovereignty 'over a territory in the Antarctic situated between the east boundary of the Falkland area and the 45th E',⁹⁷ some one million square miles of Antarctic territory, representing twenty per cent of the Antarctic coast. This time, the Soviet government was quick to respond: on 27 January 1939 the people's commissar for external affairs, Maxim Litvinov wrote to the Norwegian ambassador in Moscow informing him 'that the Soviet Government finds it necessary to reserve its position on the question of sovereignty over this territory, which was discovered by the Russian navigator Bellingshausen during his expedition in the years 1819 - 21.'⁹⁸ Soviet international lawyers Movchan and Tunkin write that the USSR never recognised any Antarctic

⁹⁴ Burhanov, V. (Ed) 1957. *Cherez okean na dreifuyushchikh lдах* [Across the ocean on drifting ice floes]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 50 - 65.

⁹⁵ McCannon, J. 1998. *Red Arctic. Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932-1939*. N.Y.: Oxford University Press: 75.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 78.

⁹⁷ USSR 1939. Soviet note to Norway reserving the position of the Soviet Government with regard to the Norwegian claim in the Antarctic, 27 January 1939. In: Bush, W. 1982. *Antarctica and International Law. A Collection of inter-state and National Documents*, vol 3. London-Rome-New York: Ocean Publications Inc.: 152.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

claims and that the note to Norway underlined the Soviet position.⁹⁹ Non recognition of claims allowed the Soviet government greater flexibility in formulating its Antarctic policy as international developments occurred. Boczek claims that '[t]his was the early warning signal of the Soviet Union's entry into the diplomatic battles over Antarctica.'¹⁰⁰

The approaching World War II inhibited further large scale Soviet polar activities, which were only resumed after the devastated, war-weary country had commenced rebuilding. The next North Pole drifting station expedition (SP 2), led by Mikhail Somov, was organized in 1950 - 1952, SP 3 led by Aleksei Tryoshnikov in 1954 - 1955, and SP 4 led by Pavel Gordienko in 1955 - 1956. All of these Soviet initiatives in the Arctic were instrumental in preparing an experienced and well equipped force of polar navigators, researchers, aviators and other personnel who were available to engage with the Antarctic when international events finally forced the USSR to turn its attention to the higher southern latitudes.

From 1919 on, Great Britain in particular had been conducting a policy the object of which was to extend imperial control over the Antarctic while acting 'without undue ostentation' in order to avoid counter-claims and international dispute.¹⁰¹ Ultimately, this policy resulted in the British Empire claiming two thirds of the Antarctic continent, though counter claims and international dispute were not avoided in the process. In fact, 'by the beginning of 1948, a significant international dispute concerning Antarctica largely involving Britain, Argentina, and Chile, which also affected Australia, France Japan, New Zealand, Norway, the Soviet Union and the United States had evolved.'¹⁰² Hall contends that this dispute had become, in the immediate post World War II period, 'one of a number of international problems with the symbolic status of a capital 'P' and that the stage was set for an attempt to

⁹⁹ Movchan, A. and G. Tunkin, 1969. Pravovoe polozhenie [Legal status]. In: Tolstikov, E. (Ed). *Atlas Antarktiki Tom II [Atlas of Antarctica Vol. II]*. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 98.

¹⁰⁰ Boczek, B. 1984. Soviet Union and the Antarctic Treaty. *American Journal of International Law* 78 (4): 836.

¹⁰¹ Hall, R. 1994. International regime formation and leadership. The origins of the Antarctic Treaty. Thesis. Doctor of Philosophy, University of Tasmania: 47; See also Beck, P. 1986. *The international politics of Antarctica*. London & Sydney: Croom Helm, 332 p.

¹⁰² Ibid: 62.

'form an international regime to govern the actions and relations among the states involved in the region.'¹⁰³ Victory in World War II had also provided the means for the USSR to attain a presence in the South Polar region and to take the first steps to gaining a foothold in the Antarctic, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁰³ Hall, R.1994. International regime formation and leadership. The origins of the Antarctic Treaty. Thesis. Doctor of Philosophy, University of Tasmania: 63; The dispute is discussed more fully in Chapter 3.

**‘THE FIRST PRACTICAL SOVIET STEPS TOWARDS
GETTING A FOOTHOLD IN THE ANTARCTIC’:
SOVIET ANTARCTIC WHALING FLOTILLA *SLAVA***¹⁰⁴

International circumstances after the conclusion of World War II helped set the stage for the USSR to become actively involved in pursuing its Antarctic interests. In particular, on 1 December 1945, under the Potsdam Agreement¹⁰⁵, the Tripartite Merchant Marine Commission completed the division of the main German shipping assets between the USA, UK and the USSR.¹⁰⁶ One of these assets, the German whale oil factory ship *Wikinger*, together with its flotilla of whale catchers, was allocated to the USSR as war reparation.¹⁰⁷ The 12,639 ton *Wikinger*, built in Newcastle (England) was one of the first whale oil factory ships, designed as both a processing facility and a tanker. Registered in Britain and later Panama, it was operated and crewed by Norwegians as the *Vikingen*. Bought in 1938 by a German company and renamed *Wikinger*, it served in the German Navy from 1939 and was seized by the Allies at Kiel in 1945. The British re-christened it the *Empire Venture* and the UK Ministry of Transport operated it in the Antarctic whaling grounds during the 1945/1946 season. The post-war distribution of assets meant that the time had arrived to transfer the *Empire Venture* to its new owner, the USSR.¹⁰⁸

The leader of the USSR, Joseph Stalin (1879 - 1953), was eager to take possession of the newly acquired ships: he saw them as the practical means which would enable him to pursue the country's political and economic interests in the Antarctic, since most of the whaling by that time was conducted in Antarctic waters.

¹⁰⁴ Submitted to *Polar Record* in May 2009. Current status – accepted for publication.

¹⁰⁵ The Potsdam Agreement was an agreement between Great Britain, the US and USSR on policy for the occupation and reconstruction of Germany and other nations after fighting in the European Theatre of World War II had ended with the German surrender in May 1945.

¹⁰⁶ Bulkeley, R. 2005. *Wikinger – Empire Venture – Slava: Chronology 1945-1946*. Unpublished manuscript (copy in possession of author).

¹⁰⁷ Tønnessen, J. and A. Johnsen. 1982. *The history of modern whaling*. London: Hurst and Company: 515.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Stalin dispatched the Deputy People's Commissar for the Merchant Fleet (from August 1942), later chief of the Main Directorate of the Northern Sea route (from August 1946) and member of the Tripartite Merchant Marine Commission Aleksandr Afanasiev (1903 - 1991) to London, with the instructions 'not to return without the whale oil factory ship and its flotilla.'¹⁰⁹ Afanasiev (Fig. 1) organized the transfer at the official level and, as a precautionary measure, had the flotilla insured for 700 thousand pounds sterling or 7 million gold roubles.¹¹⁰



Афанасьев Александр Александрович

Fig. 1. Aleksandr Afanasiev (*Sovershenno sekretno* April 2008:34)

He recalls that when he met Stalin after his return from the UK, the Soviet leader was extremely suspicious of the whole transaction. With the war time alliance rapidly deteriorating, Stalin was sure that the British would not allow the transfer to occur without incident. His distrust of his former allies led him to believe that they would rather set fire to the ships than turn them over to the USSR. Afanasiev, however, managed to relieve Stalin's apprehensions: 'such a conflagration would

¹⁰⁹ Afanasiev, A. 2003. *Na grebne volni i v puchine Stalinizma. Vospominaniya* [On the crest of a wave and in the trough of Stalinism. Memoirs]. Moscow: Ros Konsult: 253.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 259.

cost them 7 million roubles' he said, as he handed Stalin the insurance policy.¹¹¹ Also present at the meeting was Anastas Mikoyan (1895 - 1978), the Deputy President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Trade (from 19 March 1946), and the Minister responsible for the whaling industry (Fig. 2).¹¹²



Fig. 2. Anastas Mikoyan
(<http://wwii-soldat.narod.ru/NARKOMY/ARTICLES/001-mikoyan.htm>)

In the course of the conversation, Mikoyan put forward a name for the newly acquired Soviet acquisition, which Stalin approved: it was to be known as the *Slava* ('Glory' in Russian). Thus was born the Soviet Antarctic Whaling Flotilla (AWF) *Slava*, known in Russian as Antarkticheskaya Kitoboinaya Flotiliya (AKF) *Slava*.

2.1 The Antarctic Whaling Flotilla *Slava*

The British transfer of the *Empire Venture* and its whale catchers to the Soviets took place on 26 September 1946. Aleksei Solyanik (1912 - 1979?), a well known Captain-Director of the Far Eastern crab catching flotilla named *Anastas Mikoyan* and previous master of an icebreaker, together with crew, was sent to the UK to take receipt of the flotilla from the British. Solyanik, however, ran into problems, since it appears that Stalin's distrust of his former allies was not entirely without foundation. Apparently, the flotilla had been left derelict for several months.

¹¹¹ Afanasiev, A. 2003. *Na grebne volni i v puchine Stalinizma. Vospominaniya* [On the crest of a wave and in the trough of Stalinism. Memoirs]. Moscow: Ros Konsult: 260.

¹¹² Solyanik, A. 1952. *Pyatyy reis v Antarktiku* [The fifth voyage to Antarctica]. Moscow: Znanie: 5.

All German/Norwegian and British (if any) equipment which had previously been fitted to the ship had been removed for use elsewhere in the British whaling fleet.¹¹³ This was a cause for mutual recriminations between the new and previous owners. Bulkeley confirms the fact that the 'USSR [paid] for a general refit to the *Slava* flotilla in Britain.'¹¹⁴ Solyanik and his crew immediately set to work on repairs to the 'derelict' ships.¹¹⁵ Repairs to the factory ship and the whale catchers were hastily completed in time for the flotilla to leave the UK for the next, 1946–1947, whaling season. The factory ship sailed on 22 December 1946, and the catchers sailed soon after.¹¹⁶

So it was that victory in the World War II and the consequent acquisition of a flotilla specially equipped for whaling operations in the Antarctic had presented a practical opportunity for realizing the plans of Soviet political leaders and scientists for a presence in the South Polar region. As mentioned previously, the plans with the *Aleut* whaling flotilla had never eventuated. Thus, after a hiatus of some 127 years, the USSR, which considered itself to be the legal heir to the geographical discoveries of the Russian Empire, was able to once again show its colours in the Antarctic. It had now acquired an unquestionable economic interest in that part of the globe. In order to emphasize and legitimate this interest with the international community, the USSR took the step of joining the governments of Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, and the USA in becoming a signatory to the 1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, which A. Bogdanov and E. Nikishin signed on its behalf.¹¹⁷ By becoming a signatory to an international convention, the USSR gained a voice in determining policy relating to activities in the Antarctic. Although the policy was

¹¹³ Bulkeley, R. 2005. *Wikingen – Empire Venture – Slava: Chronology 1945-1946*. Unpublished manuscript (copy in possession of author).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Katkevich, V. 2006. *Zhir strane, attestat zhene* [Oil for the country and a diploma for your wife]. (Online article based on Archival documents)
http://www.odessitclub.org/reading_room/katkevich/slava.htm: 2.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ A study entitled *Materialy po promyslovoi deyatel'nosti Sovetskikh Antarkhticheskikh kitoboinih flotiliy (1947-1972)* [Soviet Antarctic Whaling Data (1947 -1972)], published in Moscow by the Centre for Russian Environmental Policy in 1995, details to what extent the Soviets actually adhered to the whaling convention. In one of the articles contained in the publication, Golovlev, the former Chief State Inspector on Whaling in the Antarctic, outlines how 'the USSR had falsified data on actual catches by Soviet whaling fleets in the Antarctic from 1948 till 1972'.

obviously limited to whaling, Wolk surmised that this was one of 'the first practical Soviet steps towards getting a foothold in the Antarctic.'¹¹⁸

Stalin could not have but recognized the political and economic ramifications of 'getting a foothold in the Antarctic'. Successful whaling operations would lead not only to economic benefits for his war ravaged country, but a physical presence in the region would add a greater weight to Soviet attempts to participate in any future negotiations in settling territorial claims and/or any arrangements for an international regime for the Antarctic. These actions were in keeping with the course that Peter Toma believes the Soviet government had already mapped out and iterated in its Memorandum of 7 June 1950. The Memorandum stated that 'insofar as the fate of the Antarctic is of interest to many countries now, it would be expedient to discuss the question of the Antarctic regime internationally in order to reach an agreement in accordance with the lawful interests of all states concerned'.¹¹⁹ The USSR was intent on projecting its post war 'superpower' status as far as possible, even to the antipodes. Short of outer space, Antarctica was as distant as the USSR could expect to project its interests. The mission was difficult, but the Soviets believed that the stakes were well worth the effort.



To ensure success of the new venture, Stalin considered it vital that the director of the new whaling operations in the Antarctic have a history of exceptional achievement in analogous conditions. To his mind, the logical candidate for the undertaking was Vladimir Voronin (1890 - 1952), who had led the first expedition to sail the Northern Sea Route in one season during the second International Polar Year of 1932 (Fig. 3. Vladimir Voronin ([http://funeralspb.narod.ru/necropols/shuvalovskoe](http://funeralspb.narod.ru/necropols/shuvalovskoe/tombs/voronin.html)

[/tombs/voronin.html](http://funeralspb.narod.ru/necropols/shuvalovskoe/tombs/voronin.html))).

¹¹⁸ Wolk, S. 1958. The basis of Soviet claims in the Antarctic. *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the USSR* 5: 44.

¹¹⁹ Toma, P. 1956. Soviet attitude towards the acquisition of territorial sovereignty in the Antarctic. *The American Journal of International Law* 1: 612.

Stalin personally instructed that Voronin be appointed Captain-Director of the flotilla,¹²⁰ although Afanasiev most likely had another contender in mind for this role. Afanasiev's candidate, Solyanik, had taken possession of the flotilla and brought it to Gibraltar for bunkering before sailing on to the Antarctic. But it was Voronin who was to take over command in Gibraltar, where he arrived on the tanker *Pamir*, which was sent to refuel the ships (Fig. 4).¹²¹



Fig. 4. *Slava* (http://www.odessitclub.org/reading_room/katkevich/slava.htm)

During its first 1946/1947 season, the AWF *Slava* was one of 15 fleets from different countries taking part in whaling activities in the Antarctic. According to Voronin it consisted of the factory ship (crew approx 370)¹²² and eight catchers,¹²³ (crew 20 - 25),¹²⁴ while according to Bulkeley, the factory ship and seven catchers left the UK for Antarctica.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Afanasiev, A. 2003. *Na grebne volni i v puchine Stalinizma. Vospominaniya* [On the crest of a wave and in the trough of Stalinism. Memoirs]. Moscow: Ros Konsult: 260.

¹²¹ Voronin, V. 1948. Pervyi pokhod Sovetskoi flotilii Slava za kitami v Antarktiku [The first voyage of the Soviet whaling flotilla Slava to the Antarctic]. *Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo Geograficheskogo Obschestva* (News of the All Union Geographical Society) 80 (3): 213-222.

¹²² Solyanik, A. 1954. *Slava v Antarktike* [Slava in the Antarctic]. Moscow: Profizdat: 5.

¹²³ Ibid, 215.

¹²⁴ Solyanik, A. 1954. *Slava v Antarktike* [Slava in the Antarctic]. Moscow: Profizdat: 5.

¹²⁵ Bulkeley, R. 2005. Wikinger – Empire Venture – Slava: Chronology 1945-1946. Unpublished manuscript (copy in possession of author); The reason for the discrepancy in the quoted numbers of whale catchers has not been able to be resolved, although an as yet unaccessed 1947 documentary film



Fig. 5. *Aleut*. Drawing by N. Kondakov (Zenkovich 1954: 16).

The task of manning the first Soviet AWF *Slava* with experienced polar mariners was not a difficult one. As indicated by Voronin, the Arctic and the Main Directorate of the Northern Sea Route was a reliable source of qualified personnel. The task of finding experienced whalers, however, was more of a problem. Although the Soviets operated the much smaller *Aleut* whaling flotilla (a factory ship and three catchers) in the Far East, the *Aleut* compared to the *Slava*, was a ‘makeshift affair’ (Fig. 5).¹²⁶ The *Aleut* could provide some, but by no means all, of the necessary manpower for the *Slava*, compelling the USSR to look beyond its own borders for instructors who could train the Soviet whalers.

Which country would be able to provide instructors for the Soviet whalers? The answer was patently obvious. During its time as the *Vikingen*, the AWF *Slava* was operated by a Norwegian crew; the country with arguably the most prodigious

entitled *Za kitami v Antarktidu* [*Chasing after whales in Antarctica*] held in the Archive of Film and Photo documents in Krasnogorsk, Russia, may shed more light on the subject.

¹²⁶ Katkevich, V. 2006. Zhir strane, attestat zhene [Oil for the country and a diploma for your wife]. (Online article based on Archival documents)
http://www.odessitclub.org/reading_room/katkevich/slava.htm: 3.

whaling experience was Norway. Consequently, it was to Norway that the Soviets looked for assistance in training its whalers and operating its new flotilla. On 29 November 1946, the Norwegian government waived the December 1945 'ship law' and allowed the USSR to employ thirty Norwegian specialists¹²⁷ 'supervised by a Norwegian captain Mr Nielsen',¹²⁸ to assist in whaling operations on the *Slava*. Veterans of the *Aleut* whaling operations in the Far East were also employed.¹²⁹ 'The Norwegian whalers taught us how to hunt whales in the Antarctic',¹³⁰ recalled Solyanik, although they 'were not in a hurry to impart the secrets of their craftsmanship, on the grounds that any increases in knowledge would accrue only over a period of decades.'¹³¹ A period of decades, however, was not the time frame envisaged by Solyanik: he advised the Minister of Foreign Trade Mikoyan that 'hunting success with the Norwegians often depends on omens, and dictated by superstitions.'¹³² He was sure that the Soviets had learnt enough of the basics of whaling without delving into its more esoteric aspects and that the Soviet whalers were quite capable of continuing without further instruction. Mikoyan took note of Solyanik's advice, with the result that in 1948, Nielsen was presented with a *Pobeda* (Victory) automobile in appreciation of his service to the USSR, and further Norwegian assistance to the AWF *Slava* was terminated. After the first two whaling seasons, the Soviets whalers were left to their own devices, although Nielsen continued to doubt the 'success of Russian self-sufficiency' in their conduct of whaling operations.¹³³

¹²⁷ Bulkeley, R. 2005. *Wikingen – Empire Venture – Slava: Chronology 1945-1946*. Unpublished manuscript (copy in possession of author).

¹²⁸ Golovlev, I. 1995. Eho 'Misterii o kitah' [Echo of the 'mystery of whales']. In: *Materialy po promyslovoi deyatel'nosti Sovetskikh Antarkticheskikh kitoboinih flotilii (1947-1972)* [Soviet Antarctic whaling data (1947-1972)]. 1995. Moscow: Tsentr Ekologicheskoy Politiki Rossii (Centre for Russian Environmental Policy): 14.

¹²⁹ Shlyamin, B. 1953. *Plavanie v Antarktiku. Zapiski uchastnika reida kitoboinoi flotilii Slava 1959-1950* [A voyage to Antarctica. Notes of a participant of the whaling flotilla Slava 1959-1950]. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 51.

¹³⁰ Solyanik, A. 1960. Antarctic letter. *New Times* 9: 15.

¹³¹ Katkevich, V. 2006. Zhir strane, attestat zhene [oil for the country and a diploma for your wife]. (Online article based on Archival documents) http://www.odessitclub.org/reading_room/katkevich/slava.htm: 8.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid, 9.

Whether Nielsen's doubts as to 'Russian self-sufficiency' were accurate was a moot point. The published whaling data suggests that the Soviets had no problem with hunting whales, to the degree that they took many more of them than allowed by the whaling convention.¹³⁴ According to the former Chief State Inspector on Whaling in the Antarctic, I. Golovlev, 'starting from the third cruise (1948/49) without Norwegian specialists the *Slava* totally ignored the whaling regulations.'¹³⁵ The absence of the Norwegians allowed the Soviets to ignore the whaling quotas imposed by the International Whaling Commission, and 'an unprecedented poaching campaign began which can be characterized as a literal extermination of whales. It lasted until 1972 when international observers appeared on whaling fleets.'¹³⁶

While providing the USSR with whale oil, meat and other products of the whaling industry, the Soviet whaling flotilla was at times used to remind other nations engaged in the exploitation of the Antarctic about its country's long standing link with that region of the globe. For example, Voronin recalls that 'at the end of February [1947] the *Slava* was at a distance of about 1200 miles from South Georgia Island. At that time it became necessary to send one of the catchers [*Slava I*] to South Georgia.'¹³⁷ He goes on to point out that the island was discovered in 1502. It was visited in 1775 by Captain James Cook and by the Russian expedition vessels *Vostok* and *Mirny* under the leadership of Captain Bellingshausen on 27 December 1819.¹³⁸ Bellingshausen's expedition had sailed along the southern shore of the island and had first named various geographical features such as Paryadin, Demidov, Kupriyanov

¹³⁴ *Materialy po promyslovoi deyatel'nosti Sovetskikh Antarkticheskikh kitoboinih flotiliy (1947-1972) [Soviet Antarctic whaling data (1947-1972)]*. 1995. Moscow: Tsentr Ekologicheskoy Politiki Rossii (Centre for Russian Environmental Policy).

¹³⁵ Golovlev, I. 1995. Eho 'Misterii o kitah' [Echo of the 'mystery of whales']. In: *Materialy po promyslovoi deyatel'nosti Sovetskikh Antarkticheskikh kitoboinih flotiliy (1947-1972) [Soviet Antarctic whaling data (1947-1972)]*. 1995. Moscow: Tsentr Ekologicheskoy Politiki Rossii (Centre for Russian Environmental Policy): 14.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹³⁷ Voronin, V. 1948. Pervyi pokhod Sovetskoi flotilii *Slava* za kitami v Antarktiku [The first voyage of the Soviet whaling flotilla *Slava* to the Antarctic]. *Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva (News of the All Union Geographical Society)* 80 (3): 218.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

Capes; Novosilskiy Bay and Annenkov Island.¹³⁹ Voronin does not explain the reason for the necessity of calling in to Grytviken on South Georgia, although Ukrainian journalist and former seafarer Vladimir Katkevich, in an article marking the 60th jubilee of the commencement of whaling operations in the Antarctic, provides a clue: 'The press immediately reported that for the first time since Bellingshausen's expedition, Russians had set foot on the island. The visit to South Georgia had a largely political significance and was planned in Moscow.'¹⁴⁰

After completing her inaugural voyage, the *Slava* arrived in its home port of Odessa on 6 July 1947,¹⁴¹ where Voronin informed the Soviet public that '[t]he Soviet whaling industry has a great future. I am sure that the time is not far off when not one, but several expeditions equipped with first class technology will leave our shores for the severe Antarctic coast. The people steering these ships through the unexplored seas of the southern latitudes will be the same ones who tamed and conquered the Arctic.'¹⁴² Voronin, one of the more renowned men who had 'tamed and conquered the Arctic', had vindicated the trust that Stalin had placed in him. Having successfully fulfilled his mission, he returned to his work at Glavsevmorput.¹⁴³ His hopes for 'several expeditions equipped with first class technology' and the future of the Soviet whaling industry were left for others to realize. And realize them they did.

One of the outstanding personalities associated with the expansion of the Soviet Antarctic whaling industry was Afanasiev's original candidate, Solyanik, who was appointed Captain - Director of the AWF *Slava* from the next 1947 - 1948

¹³⁹ Shvede, E. 1949. Podvig russkikh moreplavatelei. K 130-letiyu so dnia otkritiya Antarktidi [The heroic deed of the Russian seafarers. 130 Anniversary of the discovery of Antarctica]. *Vecherniy Leningrad* 15 July.

¹⁴⁰ Katkevich, V. 2006. Zhir strane, attestat zhene [Oil for the country and a diploma for your wife]. (Online article based on Archival documents)
http://www.odessitclub.org/reading_room/katkevich/slava.htm:7.

¹⁴¹ Voronin, V. 1948. Pervyi pokhod Sovetskoi flotilii *Slava* za kitami v Antarktiku [The first voyage of the Soviet whaling flotilla *Slava* to the Antarctic]. *Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva (News of the All Union Geographical Society)* 80 (3): 222.

¹⁴² Quoted in Konichev, K. 1949. *Ludi bolshih del [Men of great deeds]*. Arkhangelsk: Izdatelstvo tipografii imeni Sklepina (Sklepin publishing Press): 115.

¹⁴³ Katkevich, V. 2006. Zhir strane, attestat zhene [Oil for the country and a diploma for your wife]. (Online article based on Archival documents)
http://www.odessitclub.org/reading_room/katkevich/slava.htm:8.

season. Solyanik occupied this position till the end of 1959, when he was transferred to the newly established *Sovetskaya Ukraina* Antarctic Whaling Flotilla (built in Nikolaev and based, like the *Slava*, in Odessa) (Fig. 6, 7) .



Fig. 6. *Sovetskaya Ukraina* (Arctic and Antarctic Museum, St Petersburg)



Fig. 7. Aleksei Solyanik (Arctic and Antarctic Museum, St Petersburg)

Solyanik became Captain-Director of the new flotilla, which operated in the Antarctic in addition to the *Slava*. A third flotilla, the *Yuri Dolgorukiy* (based in

Kaliningrad) was established in 1960 and a fourth, the *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, (built in Nikolaev, Ukraine, and based in Vladivostok) in 1961.

2.2 Whaling, science and the inevitable politics

The operations of the Soviet whaling fleet were not limited to whaling and politics. Its objectives were somewhat broader: another of its aims 'was to conduct scientific research in the region.'¹⁴⁴ A member of several Soviet Arctic and Antarctic expeditions, geographer V. Averianov, and glaciologist Y. Koblenz affirm that, since 1946, 'scientific observations and research had been carried on all Soviet whaling flotillas operating in Antarctic waters.'¹⁴⁵ One of the flotilla's ships was always given over to a scientific group, with scientists from the All-Union Research Institute of Fishery and Oceanography and the State Oceanographic Institute on board conducting systematic research¹⁴⁶ of the climate, flora, fauna, hydrology and ice.¹⁴⁷ '[T]he scientists on the fleet occupy themselves in studying the Antarctic. We conduct orderly hydro-meteorological observations, and in this, as with many other things, we are greatly assisted by the navigators and captains of the whaling ships. Our observations of the climate; air and ocean currents; causes, force and duration of storms in different Antarctic regions have a strong practical and scientific significance',¹⁴⁸ wrote one of the participating scientists. The practical aspects were to 'actively assist the whalers in increasing their catch, [by] thoroughly studying the whales and their movements in the boundless oceans, thus simplifying their search for whale pods.'¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ Golubev, D. 1949. *Russkie v Antarktike [Russians in Antarctica]*. Moscow: Goskultprosvet: 68.

¹⁴⁵ Averianov, V. and Y. Koblenz 1970. 150-letie otkrytiya Antarktidi i Sovetskie issledovaniya v Antarktike [150th anniversary of discovery of Antarctica and Soviet research in the Antarctic]. *Informatsionnyi Bulletin Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii (Information bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic expedition)* 77: 14.

¹⁴⁶ Gusev, A. 1961. *V snegah Antarktidi [In the snows of Antarctica]*. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 26.

¹⁴⁷ Kirillov, I. and A. Rybnikov 1962. Pervoe krugosvetnoe plavanie Sovetskoi kitoboinoi flotilii *Slava* [The first circumnavigation of the world by the Soviet whaling flotilla *Slava*]. In: *Sovetskie ekspeditsii [Soviet expeditions]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 22.

¹⁴⁸ *Slava. Zapiski Sovetskikh kitoboev. 1955 [Slava. Notes of the Soviet whalers]*. Odessa: Odesskoe oblastnoe izdatelstvo (Odessa regional press): 273.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

The *Slava* voyages were the first to conduct scientific observations which were continued on later Soviet whaling expeditions.¹⁵⁰ The escalation of Soviet whaling operations and the associated scientific research was cause for a heightened sense of anxiety on the part of Western governments. For example, at the conclusion of the IGY, a secret inward cablegram dated 25 April 1959 from the Australian Embassy in Washington reported that 'Soviet operations in the 1958 - 59 Antarctic season have included not only the fulfilment of publicised plans to expand into another part of the Antarctic - Queen Maud Land - but an unusual employment of the USSR's whaling fleet - headed by the whale factory ship *Slava* - for scientific and political purposes in the South Pacific Antarctic waters.'¹⁵¹ One of these 'political purposes' was the *Slava* visit to Wellington in May 1958, a date which coincided with the Soviet 9 May Victory Day celebrations (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Aleksei Solyanik and NZ Prime Minister Walter Nash (*Flight* 9 May 1958)

Its captain, Solyanik, met the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Mr Walter Nash, and 'played host to the famous Polar explorers Sir Vivian Fuchs and Sir Edmund Hillary' who 'spoke with admiration of the courage and valour of the Soviet scientists, flyers and seamen who took part in research work on the sixth

¹⁵⁰ Averianov, V. and Y. Koblenz 1970. 150-letie otkrytiya Antarktidi i Sovetskie issledovaniya v Antarktike [150th Anniversary of discovery of Antarctica and Soviet research in the Antarctic]. *Informatsionniy Bulletin Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii* (Information bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic expedition) 77: 14.

¹⁵¹ Department of External Affairs. 1959. Inward cablegram. From Australian Embassy, Washington, 25 April 1959. Soviet whaling Fleet's Activities in Antarctica broadened. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/13/1 part 2.

continent.¹⁵² The good will visit was a follow up to the previous visits of the Soviet Antarctic expedition to Wellington in 1956¹⁵³ and for the international Antarctic symposium of 18 - 22 February 1958.¹⁵⁴ 'Peace and friendship' and a 'deepening of understanding between the people of New Zealand and our country'¹⁵⁵ was the proclaimed object of these visits. Solyanik also took the opportunity of spreading the word about the then Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's new peace initiative: '[h]umanity is impatiently waiting for the day when Khrushchov's (sic) proposal for general and complete disarmament becomes a reality and the horrible menace of destructive nuclear wars disappears. That is why the eyes of the world are turned to Washington, London and Paris. The next step is up to them.'¹⁵⁶

The writers of the cablegram from the Australian Embassy in Washington, however, were not convinced by either Khrushchev's or the leader of the whaling expedition's peace loving rhetoric. They make the observation that, aside from politics, '[t]his unusual use of whaling vessels maintains continuity of scientific observations in the Bellingshausen Sea area started by the Research vessel *Ob* in the 1957 - 58 season'. They also suggest that 'the continued interest in the area of the unclaimed sector, where American interests are strongest may also have significant political implications.' Furthermore, they sound a warning about the increasing role of the USSR in Antarctic whaling: '[i]n addition to boosting Soviet prestige and economic interests in the Antarctic Area, enlarged whaling operations will provide increased support to scientific efforts there. The oceanographic observations on density, salinity and temperatures would have additional military significance for submarine navigation and underwater sound propagation studies.'¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Solyanik, A. 1960. Antarctic letter. *New Times* 9: 15.

¹⁵³ Gan, I. 2009. The reluctant hosts: Soviet Antarctic expedition ships visit Australia and New Zealand in 1956. *Polar Record* 45 (232): 37-50.

¹⁵⁴ Nudelman, A. 1959. *Sovetskie ekspeditsii v Antarktiku 1955-1959 [Soviet expeditions to the Antarctic 1955-1959]*. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk SSR (Academy of Sciences Press): 37.

¹⁵⁵ Kort, V. 1959. Tretiya morskaya Antarkticheskaya ekspeditsiya AN SSSR [Third marine Antarctic expedition of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed.). *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle [On the far south land]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 416.

¹⁵⁶ Solyanik, A. 1960. Antarctic letter. *New Times* 9: 15.

¹⁵⁷ Department of External Affairs. 1959. Inward cablegram. From Australian Embassy, Washington, 25 April 1959. Soviet whaling Fleet's Activities in Antarctica broadened. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/13/1 part 2.

2.3 Conclusion

The first practical Soviet step to getting a foothold in the Antarctic had resulted in the growth from one to a total of four Antarctic whaling flotillas which 'combined whaling with significant scientific work, directed towards extending knowledge of the region. Scientific work on the whaling flotillas [became] a part of the overall programme of Soviet Antarctic research.'¹⁵⁸ The greatly increased presence of Soviet ships in the Southern Ocean, their ability to traverse large areas, make high profile visits to foreign ports and display their advanced technology and scientific research demonstrated the seriousness of Soviet intentions to other nations. In this way, the USSR had 'skilfully insinuat[ed] its presence in Antarctica.'¹⁵⁹ It had also resulted in an added irritant to the already mounting unease of the Australian government at the Soviet presence in the South Polar region.

The heightened awareness of Soviet Antarctic operations shown by Western governments indicated that the USSR was indeed on the way to achieving its goal of becoming a major player in the Antarctic arena. By the time the nations with interests in the South Polar region were ready to decide on an international regime for the Antarctic in the late 1950s, the 'first practical Soviet steps towards getting a foothold in the Antarctic' had led to the USSR firmly entrenching itself in that part of the world. The occasion to further insinuate its presence by expanding scientific work on the icy continent itself and securing an even more wide-ranging presence in the Antarctic arose with the proposal for collaborative international research during the IGY, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁵⁸ Semenov, I. 1964. *Flagman Baltiiskih kitoboev [Flagship of the Baltic whalers]*. Kaliningrad: Kalinigradskoe knizhnoe izdatelstvo (Kaliningrad Press): 53.

¹⁵⁹ Boczek, B. Soviet Union and the Antarctic Treaty. *American Journal of International Law* 78 (4): 839 – 840.

THE SOVIET PREPARATION FOR THE IGY ANTARCTIC PROGRAM AND THE AUSTRALIAN RESPONSE: POLITICS AND SCIENCE¹⁶⁰

3.1 Conflicting Antarctic territorial claims and a proposed solution

After the end of World War II and the Allied victory over Nazi Germany in May 1945, the Soviet Union, although devastated by the war effort, found itself in an extremely powerful political position. The meeting between Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, the heads of the governments of the USSR, USA and the United Kingdom, in the Crimean city of Yalta in February 1945 virtually decided the future political landscape of Europe and Asia. The USSR, as one of the two emerging world superpowers (the UK having been weakened by the war), used the conference to greatly extend its sphere of influence not only in Europe, but also in the Far East by agreeing to declare war on an almost defeated Japan.

Stalin's post-bellum attempts to consolidate and expand his control in Eastern Europe, Iran, Turkey and Greece were perceived by both the US and the UK as a violation of the Yalta agreements. In order to prevent this perceived expansion of Soviet influence and preserve a 'balance of power' between the superpowers, Harry Truman, who became the new American President after the death of Roosevelt, was determined to use all the means at his disposal: military, economic and political in his 'Policy of Containment' of Soviet ambitions.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ This chapter is based on a paper presented to the second SCAR Workshop on the history of Antarctic Research entitled 'Multidimensional exploration of Antarctica around the 1950s', Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, Santiago, Chile, 21-22 September 2006. It is now in Press 2009, *Chilean Antarctic Institute*.

¹⁶¹ Ambrose, S. 1973. *Rise to globalism. American Foreign Policy since 1938*. Third revised edition. Ringwood: Penguin books: 347; See also Hall. R. 1994. International regime formation and leadership. The origins of the Antarctic Treaty. Thesis. Doctor of Philosophy, University of Tasmania.

It was against this background that in August 1948, the United States government proposed a solution to a situation concerning Antarctica that had developed by the late 1940s and became known as the 'Antarctic Problem'. Seven countries – Britain, New Zealand, France, Australia, Norway, Chile and Argentina had asserted sovereignty claims to Antarctic territory. The claims of Britain, Argentina and Chile overlapped, leading to tensions between these countries, and to a degree, involved Australia and New Zealand, who after all were members of the British Commonwealth. Although Christie, a former British Embassy staff member in Argentina, considered that British and American strategic interests in Antarctica were identical¹⁶², Templeton points out that the British Foreign Office was alarmed about the effects of American explorations on the New Zealand claim¹⁶³ and felt that Australia and New Zealand would be well advised to take steps to strengthen their claims. The US found itself placed in the middle of a conflict between its major ally, Great Britain and its fellow signatories of the Pan-American Treaty (Argentina and Chile) which provided for the security of the Western Hemisphere.

The US position was complicated by the contradictory attitudes in the internal American debate about its own possible Antarctic territorial claims in the Antarctic.¹⁶⁴ The debate revolved around the adherence or non-adherence of interested parties to the Hughes Doctrine (after Secretary of State Charles Evan Hughes) of 1924, which required that that sovereignty claims be based on occupation rather than exploration.¹⁶⁵ In his opus entitled *The Antarctic Problem*, Christie suggests that the initiative in reaching a solution to the problem could only be taken by those nations which created it (i.e. Argentina, Chile and Great Britain) by having the matter settled by the International Court of Justice.¹⁶⁶ These nations, however, have never been able to agree to have the matter adjudicated by the International

¹⁶² Christie, H. 1951. *The Antarctic Problem. An Historical and Political Study*. London: George and Unwin Ltd: 295.

¹⁶³ Templeton, M. 2000. *A wise adventure. NZ and Antarctica 1920-1960*. Wellington: Victoria University, 328p.

¹⁶⁴ Moore, J. 2004. Bungled publicity: Little America, big America, and the rationale for non-claimancy. *Polar Record* 40 (212): 19.

¹⁶⁵ See: Hall, R. 1989. The 'open door' into Antarctica: an explanation of the Hughes doctrine. *Polar Record* 25 (153): 137-140.

¹⁶⁶ Christie, H. 1951. *The Antarctic Problem. An Historical and Political Study*. London: George and Unwin Ltd: 300.

Court and consequently, no international solution to the problem has been reached. Notwithstanding the fact that all territorial disputes have been frozen by the Antarctic Treaty, which was signed by the parties in 1959 and ratified in 1961, Dodds notes that in light of the dispute between Argentina and Britain over the Falkland Island Dependencies in 1982, the territorial dispute remains unresolved to this day.¹⁶⁷

The difficult position in which the US found itself politically in relation to the Antarctic Problem led it to adopt a stance that would allow it complete freedom of action: it refused to recognize the territorial claims of any of the protagonists, while reserving its own rights in the region. To safeguard its freedom of action, the US Secretary of Defence argued that it was 'imperative that sovereignty or active participation in control of the Antarctic, under trusteeship arrangements or otherwise, should be denied groups of nations which include our most probable enemies.'¹⁶⁸ The 'probable enemy' was obviously the Soviet Union, and according to the US policy of containment, 'the entire Antarctic continent and its off-lying islands should be either under American control or that of potentially friendly powers.'¹⁶⁹ To achieve this outcome, the US and UK considered various options. Finally, in 1948, the US circulated a proposal for an eight-power condominium of the claimant countries and itself as a solution to the conflicting claims over the Antarctic continent to the governments of Argentina, Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom, while deliberately excluding the USSR.

3.2 The Soviet reaction to the proposal

At the time of the US proposal, the USSR had already begun to display an interest in the Antarctic by conducting whaling operations in the Southern Ocean, although, without doubt, the main thrust of Soviet Polar interest during the previous 25 years was the development of the Northern Sea Route and the Soviet North.¹⁷⁰ This interest intensified after World War II when the USA, Canada and Great

¹⁶⁷ Dodds, K. 2002. *Pink Ice. Britain and the South Atlantic Empire*. London: I.B. Tauris. : 211.

¹⁶⁸ Klotz F. 1990. *America on the Ice. Antarctic Policy Issues*. Washington: National Defence University Press: 21.

¹⁶⁹ Christie, H. 1951. *The Antarctic Problem. An Historical and Political Study*. London: George and Unwin Ltd: 295.

¹⁷⁰ McCannon, J. 1998. *Red Arctic. Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932-1939*. New York: Oxford University Press, 234 p.

Britain, who had realised the significant strategic and economic role of the Arctic in war-time operations, devoted greater resources to the North Polar region. The Soviet Union regarded increased Anglo-American and Canadian activity in the Arctic as a threat to its own leadership in Arctic exploration and research. The Deputy Director of the Arctic Research Institute considered it essential to obtain comprehensive information about Western Polar programs and sought allocation of more resources to broaden the scope of research of the Arctic as a whole.¹⁷¹ In 1946, the Director of the Institute, Victor Buinitskiy, had attempted to broaden the scope of research to the South Polar region, but his plans for investigating the Antarctic were ahead of political developments.¹⁷² A closed meeting of Communist Party members at the Institute accused him and several of his colleagues of ignoring the North Sea Route in favour of a 'fanciful' expedition to the Antarctic.¹⁷³ Antarctica was definitely not yet a priority. However, the American proposal galvanized the USSR to reassess its priorities: the reaction to the attempt to exclude it from a vast continent that had potential economic, strategic and global political significance ensued fairly quickly.

The Directorate of the Northern Sea Route outlined the official Soviet view of the American initiative in its journal, *The Northern Chronicle* in an article entitled 'The Struggle for Antarctica'. The author, Afonin, (1949) describes the 'charade' in which the US and 'other imperialist countries' had embroiled themselves in their attempts to establish an international regime for the Antarctic without the participation of the USSR. He soberly assesses the geo-strategic significance of the Antarctic for the US and its allies in ensuring security of the Western hemisphere, as well as condemning the 'colonial anachronism' implicit in territorial claims. In pursuing their ill-conceived ambitions, he continues, the 'American expansionists'

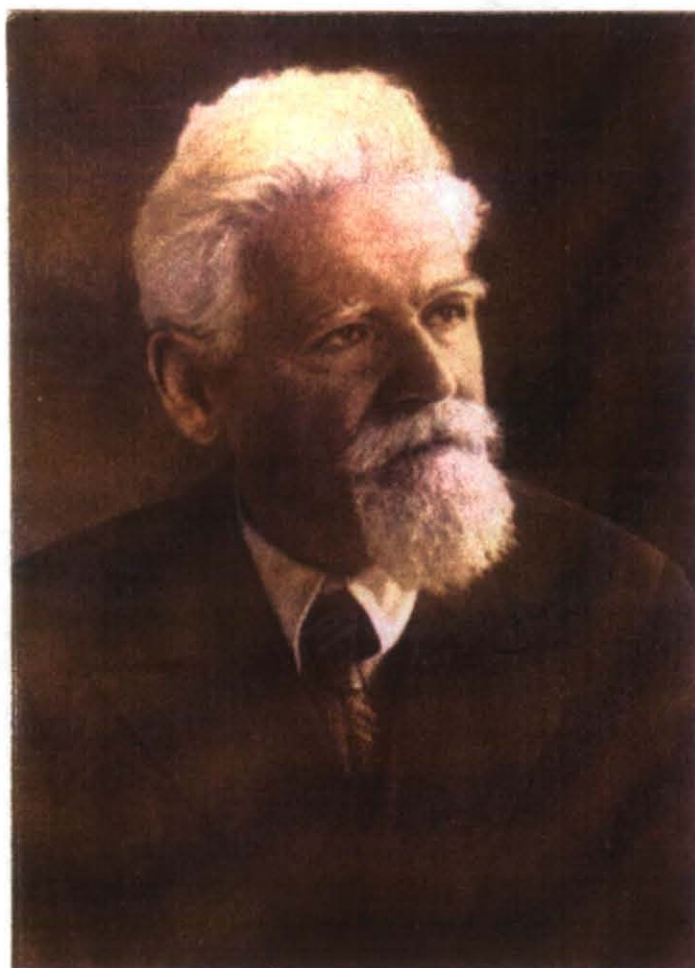
¹⁷¹ Maksimov, I. 1945. Dokladnaya zapiska zamestitelyu nachalnika GSMP pri SNK SSSR V.D. Novikovu, Sentyabr 1945 [Report to the Deputy Director of the Northern Sea Directorate V. Novikov, September 1945]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Sotsialno-Politicheskoi Istorii (Russian State Archives of Socio-political History RGASPI) F 475 Op 1 D 43, p. 193 – 213.

¹⁷² Laktionov A. 1965. Istoriya issledovaniya Antarktiki 1930-1958 [History of Antarctic Research 1930-1958]. St Petersburg, Russia: Tsentralniy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv nauchno-tehnicheskoi dokumentatsii [Central State Archives of scientific and technical documentation] TsGANTD, File 369, op 2-1, ed 457.

¹⁷³ Timofeev, 1947. Doklad o reshenii kollegii Glavsevmorputi ot 26.09 [1947] o vipolnenii postanovleniya partsobraniya Arkticheskogo instituta ot 1.08.1947 po delu professorov Kluevoi i Roskina [Report of the Glavsevmorput board decision of 26.09 [1947] regarding the implementation of the party meeting resolution of 1.08.1947 concerning the case of professors Klyueva and Roskin]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv sotsialno politicheskoi istorii [Russian State Archives for Socio -Political History] RGASPI, File 475, op 1, d 43: 6.

had completely ignored the Soviet Union's rights of prior discovery of the Antarctic continent and several sub-Antarctic islands by the Russian Antarctic expedition of 1819 - 21. The author comes to the alarming conclusion that the sole aim of 'aggressive circles' in the US is to justify American expansion into the South Polar region in order to incorporate it into a worldwide network of bases in preparation for another world war.¹⁷⁴

Afonin had thus outlined the magnitude of the threat that the American inspired settlement of the Antarctic Problem held for the Soviet Union if the latter did not take a firm stand and insist on being part of the solution. It was incumbent on the Geographical Society of the USSR to delineate the Soviet interest in the Antarctic and build a robust juridical case for Soviet participation. The Society convened a meeting in Leningrad on 10 February 1949 which was attended by 400 scientists.



Л. Берг

Fig. 9. Lev Berg (personal collection of Sergei Lukianov)

¹⁷⁴ Afonin, M. 1949. Borba vokrug Antarktiki [The Struggle for Antarctica]. *Letopis Severa* (North Chronicle) 31: 284.

The President of the Geographical Society, academician Lev Berg (1876 - 1950) (Fig. 9) delivered the main address entitled 'Russian Discoveries in the Antarctic and Present-day interest in that Area'. He pointed out that 'historically Russia, and by succession the USSR has the right of priority of discovering a number of Antarctic lands'¹⁷⁵ by the First Russian Antarctic expedition of 1819 - 1821 led by Captain Thaddeus Bellingshausen. Priority in discoveries was seen as an extremely important factor in establishing territorial claims because 'rights are said to accrue from it.'¹⁷⁶ Mention was also made of the Soviet *Slava* whaling flotilla which began its activities in 1946, as well as the potential discovery of mineral and marine resources, the advantageous flight routes, the sub-Antarctic islands, and the fact that neither Russia nor the USSR had ever relinquished the Russian discoveries of Antarctic islands. The meeting adopted a resolution urging the Soviet Government to participate in any international settlement concerning the Antarctic. It considered that 'no solution of the problem of a regime for the Antarctic without the participation of the Soviet Union can have legal force, and the USSR has every reason not to recognize any such solution.'¹⁷⁷ Newspapers; journals; radio and newsreels/documentary films reported widely on the deliberations of the Society in particular and on Antarctica in general, thus stimulating a wide public appreciation of the significance of the Antarctic for the USSR.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Berg, L. 1949. Russkie otkritiya v Antarktike i sovremenniy interes k nei [Russian discoveries in the Antarctic and present-day interest in that area]. *Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo Geographicheskogo obschestva* (Report of the All Union Geographical Society) 2: 144.

¹⁷⁶ Auburn, F. 1982. *Antarctic law and politics*. London: C. Hurst & Co: 78.

¹⁷⁷ USSR 1949. Resolution of 10 February 1949 concerning Antarctica adopted by the All-Union Geographical Society. In: Bush, W. 1982. *Antarctica and International Law. A Collection of interstate and National Documents*, vol 3. London-Rome-New York: Ocean Publications Inc.: 207.

¹⁷⁸ Besides the Party and Government newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, *Krasnaya Tatariya* on 25 February 1949, for example, ran an article 'Pervye issledovaniya Antarktidi' (First investigations in Antarctica)] and the paper intended for schoolchildren, *Pionerskaya Pravda* on 8 April 1949 printed 'Antarktidu Otkryli Russkie' (Antarctica was discovered by the Russians)]; a documentary film about Soviet Antarctic whaling by S. Kogan 'Za kitami v Antarktidu' (Hunting whales in Antarctica) was released in 1947.

The UK and the US were of the view that the resolution of the Geographical Society had no official standing and that no official notice should be taken of it.¹⁷⁹ However, they could no longer ignore the issue, when on 7 June 1950, a Memorandum based on the deliberations of the Society was delivered by the Soviet government to the governments of Argentina, Australia, France, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States (but not to Chile, with which it did not have diplomatic relations). The Memorandum stated that 'all countries concerned should be invited to take part in discussing the regime of any sphere of international importance and that the Soviet government cannot recognize as lawful any decision on the Antarctic regime taken without its participation.'¹⁸⁰ The Soviet Union was determined to broaden international participation in achieving a solution to the Antarctic Problem by proposing that 'many other states' to whom the 'Antarctic continent is of importance' participate in negotiations.¹⁸¹

The reaction in the UK and the US to the official Soviet Memorandum was typical of the prevailing Cold War tensions of the time. L. Kirwan, the Director of the British Royal Geographical Society in an article in *Spectator* magazine described the Memorandum as 'a new and curious development in the Cold War' saying that the Soviet Union 'has found a new and admirable field for her talent for political warfare and for diversionary and dividing tactics'. He feared that the Soviets had sufficient material to cause embarrassment to the Antarctic powers in view of the 'complicated evidence on which claims to national sovereignty in the Antarctic are based and the formidable problems of international law to which they give rise.'¹⁸² Analysing the Soviet position, Toma in *The American Journal of International Law* claimed that the Soviets viewed international law as an inter-class law aimed at furthering the interests of the proletariat in its struggle for world supremacy. He concluded that the solution envisaged by the Soviet Union for the Antarctic would

¹⁷⁹ See footnotes in Bush, W. 1982. *Antarctica and International Law*. A collection of inner-state and National Documents, vol 3. London-Rome-New York: Ocean Publications Inc.: 207.

¹⁸⁰ USSR 1950. Soviet Memorandum of 7 June 1950 on the participation of the Soviet Union in any international settlement concerning Antarctica. In: Bush, W. 1982. *Antarctica and International Law*. A Collection of inter-state and National Documents, vol 3. London-Rome-New York: Ocean Publications Inc.: 209.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 208.

¹⁸² Kirwan, L. 1950. Russia and Antarctica. *The Spectator*, 23 June: 849-850.

'optimally aim at converting such an international agency into an instrument of Soviet policy.'¹⁸³ Although the US chose not to respond to the Memorandum, its hope to exclude the USSR from the Antarctic proved to be 'rather naïve.'¹⁸⁴

3.3 An opportunity for action

Meanwhile, an avowedly apolitical proposal put forward by scientists provided an opportunity for the USSR to further demonstrate an interest and secure a foothold in the Antarctic. The American scientist, Dr Lloyd Berkner suggested in April 1950 that a third International Polar Year (IPY) be held in 1957,¹⁸⁵ 'twenty five years after the previous Polar Year (as opposed to fifty years between the first two).'¹⁸⁶ Berkner's suggestion was accepted by the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) in 1951, which in 1953 expanded the scope of research from polar to global, renaming it the International Geophysical Year (IGY); it ran from 1 July 1957 to 31 December 1958. The ICSU set up a committee [the Comité Spécial de l'Année Géophysique Internationale (CSAGI)] to plan a scientific program and invite participation of interested scientific bodies.¹⁸⁷ The first meeting of CSAGI held in Brussels from 30 June to 3 July 1953 formulated the international IGY program and, because the Soviet Union was not at that time a member of the ICSU, decided to invite the Soviets to renew the cooperation that had marked their participation in the first two International Polar Years.¹⁸⁸ Two member organizations of the ICSU, the International Astronomical Union and the World Meteorological

¹⁸³ Toma, P. 1956. Soviet attitude towards the acquisition of territorial sovereignty in the Antarctic. *The American Journal of International Law* 1: 624.

¹⁸⁴ Klotz F. 1990. *America on the Ice. Antarctic Policy issues*. Washington: National Defence University Press: 24.

¹⁸⁵ Hall, R. 2001. Casey and the negotiation of the Antarctic Treaty. In: J. Jabour-Green & M. Haward (Ed). *The Antarctic: Past, Present and Future*. Hobart: CRC: 29

¹⁸⁶ Hamblin, J. 2005. *Oceanographers and the cold war. Disciples of marine science*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press: 61.

¹⁸⁷ Fogg, G. 1992. *A history of Antarctic science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 169.

¹⁸⁸ Sullivan, W. 1961. *Assault on the Unknown. The International Geophysical Year*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company: 26.

Organization to which the Soviet Union belonged were asked to 'try to induce the USSR to collaborate in the IGY.'¹⁸⁹

These measures were proposed to a new Soviet leadership following Stalin's death in March 1953. The Stalinist period was a difficult one for many sections of the population of the Soviet Union, including scientists, who had little opportunity to participate in international meetings. After the end of World War II, Stalin had instigated a cleansing in the ranks of 'backward Soviet intelligentsia' who had fallen victim to 'capitalist propaganda' and 'kow-towed to all things foreign' while being blind to the 'superiority of our economy, culture and science over the decaying capitalist culture.'¹⁹⁰ Stalin's death brought an easing of restrictions, and scientists acquired a greater freedom to collaborate in international scientific organizations. The new found freedom and consequent realignment of Antarctic policy encouraged a group of scientists from the Department of Marine Expeditions of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR to meet in Moscow in 1954 and take the initiative in ensuring Soviet participation in the IGY. Dr. Ivan Dimitrievitch Papanin, head of the Department and former leader of the first Soviet Arctic drifting station named *Severniiy Polus 1* (North Pole 1) in 1937, chaired the group's meetings. They prepared a research program, an aviation plan and formulated recommendations which were submitted by the Academy of Sciences to the Council of Ministers of the USSR as a basis on which to draft any future legislation related to its participation in the IGY. On 19 July 1954,¹⁹¹ the USSR government established an Interdepartmental Committee of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR consisting of representatives from the various institutes making up the Academy.

¹⁸⁹ *Annals of the IGY 1958. The International Geophysical Year meetings*, vol. IIA. London, New York, Paris, Los Angeles: Pergamon Press: 2.

¹⁹⁰ Timofeev, 1947. Doklad o reshenii kollegii Glavsevmorputi ot 26.09 [1947] o vipolnenii postanovleniya partsobraniya Arkticheskogo instituta ot 1.08.1947 po delu professorov Kluevoi i Roskina [Report of the Glavsevmorput board decision of 26.09 [1947] regarding the implementation of the party meeting resolution of 1.08.1947 concerning the case of professors Klyueva and Roskin]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv sotsialno politicheskoi istorii [Russian State Archives for Social and Political History] RGASPI, File 475, op 1, d 43.

¹⁹¹ Sisakyan 1956. Polozhenie o mezhvedomstvennom komitete po podgotovke i provedenii Mezhdunarodnogo Geofizicheskogo Goda, 2 Noyabria 1956 [Constitution of the Interdepartmental Committee to prepare for and conduct the IGY program 2 November 1956]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economic Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2585.

The committee chaired by academician I. P. Bardin and aided by Vice-chairmen Professor V. V. Belousov, Dr. Yu. D. Boulanger and N. V. Pushkov, was to be responsible for preparing and conducting the IGY research program, processing the research data and publishing the results. Although the Academy of Sciences missed the May 1954 deadline for submitting its national program, a delegation led by Belousov attended the second meeting of the CSAGI held in Rome from 30 September to 4 October 1954, where he announced that the Academy of Sciences of the USSR had established a national committee for the IGY. In keeping with the Soviet's adherence to the principle of including a wider representation of nations in deliberations regarding the Antarctic, Belousov suggested 'that countries of vast area (China, India and the USSR) should be represented in CSAGI.'¹⁹² However, the President of the meeting, British geophysicist Sydney Chapman pointed out that members of CSAGI were chosen on a functional rather than national basis – 'they represent international bodies concerned with particular branches of science, and not the nations of which they are members.'¹⁹³ Belousov did not press the point. Apparently he concurred with Chapman's assertion that the key to fruitful cooperation was a 'single-minded devotion to science.'¹⁹⁴

It was with this 'single-minded devotion to science' that Belousov attended CSAGI's First Antarctic conference which was held in Paris on 6 - 10 July 1955. He arrived at the conference one day after it opened to report on the Antarctic scientific program proposed by the USSR Academy of Sciences. The conference president, M. G. Laclavère, asked him to indicate the position of the Soviet bases on the Antarctic map. Belousov indicated a site on the Knox coast, and another in the vicinity of the geographic South Pole, but was told that the site at the geographic South Pole was already taken by the US. The conference recommended that the USSR consider an alternative site towards the centre of the continent (at the Pole of Inaccessibility) where no station had yet been proposed, and an intermediate station in the vicinity of the South Geomagnetic Pole. Belousov's consent to the recommendation, and his further proposal for an exchange of scientific and technical information on the

¹⁹² *Annals of the IGY 1958. The International Geophysical Year meetings*, vol. IIA. London, New York, Paris, Los Angeles: Pergamon Press: 85.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

organization of bases, which was accepted by the president,¹⁹⁵ was indicative of the Soviet scientists' desire to be as co-operative as possible in their efforts at international collaboration. They also believed that their own science would benefit from the exposure to a wider international scientific community and a collaborative approach.

3.4 Soviet Antarctic intentions

The IGY program, which included research programs in the upper atmosphere, outer space and the Polar regions, had much wider ramifications than benefitting Soviet science: successful participation in the IGY would bolster national prestige and reinforce Soviet demands for a voice in formulating a regime for the Antarctic. The USSR considered its participation in the IGY a matter of national significance, and the associated space program and Antarctic research were major commitments. The Antarctic commitment was confirmed by a decree of the Council of Ministers issued on 13 July 1955 establishing the first composite Soviet Antarctic expedition (SAE), which was to consist of two parts: a continental expedition and a marine expedition. The first was to operate on the continent year round, whereas the second was to conduct research using expedition ships in coastal Antarctic waters and in the open sea.¹⁹⁶ The First vice-chairman of the Council of Ministers and member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan¹⁹⁷ was assigned overall Party and Government responsibility for the first SAE. The Academy of Sciences; the Minister of the Merchant Fleet (V. Bakayev); the Head of the Merchant Fleet Ministry's Directorate of the Northern Sea Route (V. Burhanov); the Central Bureau of Hydrometeorological Services and other Ministries and Departments were charged with the responsibility of organizing the expedition, implementing the research program and providing technical and logistic support.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ *Annals of the IGY 1958. The International Geophysical Year meetings*, vol. IIA. London, New York, Paris, Los Angeles: Pergamon Press: 406, 408.

¹⁹⁶ Korotkevich, E. and L. Dubrovin 1984. Two decades of Soviet Research in the Antarctic. In: Avsyuk, G. *The Antarctic Committee report. Main results of twenty years' research in the Antarctic*. Washington: American Publishing Co: 3.

¹⁹⁷ Lukin, V., N. Kornilov and N. Dmitriev 2006. *Sovetskiye i Rossiyskiye Antarkticheskaya ezpeditsii v tsifrah i faktah (1955-2005) [Soviet and Russian Antarctic expeditions – facts and figures (1955 – 2005)]*. St Petersburg: AARI: 5.

¹⁹⁸ Zolotoukhin 1958. V Soviet Ministrov SSSR. Pismo nachalnika Glavnogo Upravleniya gidrometsluzhbi pri Sovete Ministrov [To the Council of Ministers. A letter from the head of the chief

The primary task of the first SAE of 1955 - 1957 was to commence preparations for the requirements of the Soviet IGY Antarctic program, including building a main coastal base named *Mirny* (peaceful) after one of the two sloops which took part in Bellingshausen's expedition under the command of Lieutenant M. P. Lazarev. The naming of the main base was an astute political move by the Soviets: it emphasized both the claim to Bellingshausen's prior discovery of the Antarctic continent and the peaceful scientific purpose of the Soviet expedition. It thus highlighted the contrast between the explicitly non-aggressive nature of the Soviet Antarctic expedition and the ambiguous nature of the US expedition which was under the military command of the US Navy. The implication of the naming was not lost on the Australian Department of External Affairs: the Assistant Secretary of the Department, J C Kevin, suggested to one of his officers in London to avoid wherever possible using the name *Mirny* in any official statements. It was to be described as 'the Russian scientific camp on the coast of Queen Mary Land near Haswell Islet in the Australian Antarctic Territory.'¹⁹⁹

Additional tasks of the expedition included preparatory work in selecting sites for the inner continental polar stations which had been suggested by the CSAGI First Antarctic conference: *Vostok* (named after Captain Th. Bellingshausen's sloop and once again underscoring prior discovery) at the South Geomagnetic Pole and *Sovetskaya* ('belonging to the Soviets') at the Pole of Inaccessibility. All these sites for the proposed Soviet stations were located on territory claimed by Australia in the sector comprising forty-two per cent of the Antarctic continent and proclaimed by an Act of the Australian Parliament on 13 June 1933 as the Australian Antarctic Territory (AAT). In 1954, Australia had acted to cement its claim and built an outpost named *Mawson* (after the Antarctic explorer, Sir Douglas Mawson who had taken possession of the Territory for the British Empire) as a formal act of 'settling' its new colony. Collis sees the intention to build a Soviet base on the AAT as

directorates of the Hydromet service Zolotoukhin, 2 June 1958]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economic Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2594.

¹⁹⁹ Kevin, J. C. G. 1956. Antarctic - Information for Argentina. Letter to the External Affairs officer 24 May 1956. London. Canberra: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4.

intrinsically 'anti-colonial' and designed to reject Australia's claim,²⁰⁰ since the USSR had adopted much the same position of withholding recognition of Antarctic claims and reserving its own rights as the US had done.

3.5 Australian reactions

Being a member of the British Empire and an ally of the US, Australia in the political sense stood firmly in the Western camp, but was isolated from it geographically. The geographical isolation gave rise to a certain feeling of insecurity in this apparently vulnerable, sparsely-populated country and led the Australian government to place great reliance on its membership of the British Commonwealth and closer post-war ties with the US in formulating foreign policy. The political confrontations with the USSR in Europe were exacerbated by growing anti-colonial nationalist/communist sentiments in South East Asia and China. In 1946, the Australian Labor Government Minister for External Affairs, Dr Herbert Vere Evatt, tended to support the United Nations and its internationalist approach to solving world problems, rather than the overtly anti-communist Anglo-American approach. He held a cautiously optimistic view of perceived Soviet post-war expansionism and was of the opinion that the USSR pursued such a policy for defensive, rather than offensive reasons. After the elections in 1949, the new Liberal Prime Minister, Robert Gordon Menzies, adopted a more staunchly anti-communist stance, which was hardened by the communist incursion into South Korea in 1950 and the resultant Korean War. He saw the communists as being 'ideologically driven, remorseless, ruthless, patient and cunning in the extreme in their long-term quest to impose communism on the rest of the world'. In 1951, Menzies suggested that Australia had no more than three years to prepare itself for a war with 'Imperialist Communist' forces.²⁰¹ The external communist menace was compounded by communist threats from inside Australia itself – the communist dominated trade unions had initiated a series of strikes which crippled the country, and Menzies attempted to ban the Communist Party of Australia.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Collis, C. 2007. *Mawson and Mirny stations: the spatiality of the Australian Antarctic Territory, 1956-61. Australian Geography* 38 (2): 215.

²⁰¹ Lowe, D. 1999. *Menzies. The great world struggle. Australia's Cold War 1948-1954*. Sydney: University of NSW: 74.

²⁰² Griffiths, T. 2007. *Slicing the silence. Voyaging to Antarctica*. Sydney: University of NSW: 139.

While the necessities of cooperation during World War II had facilitated the establishment of diplomatic relations between Australia and the USSR at legation level on 10 October 1942,²⁰³ they eventually deteriorated and came to an abrupt end in April 1954. The occasion for the rupture was the defection in April 1954 of the Third Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Canberra, Vladimir Petrov (1907 - 1991), who, with the assistance of the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO), had made a decision to seek political asylum in Australia. His wife Evdokia (1914 - 2002) sought asylum several days later at Darwin airport while being escorted back to Moscow by Soviet diplomatic couriers. Petrov, who had the rank of Colonel in the Soviet intelligence service, and his wife, who had the rank of Captain, provided details of an alleged communist spy network in Australia to a Royal Commission on Espionage specially appointed to investigate their claims.²⁰⁴ As a protest at the role played by the Australian government in the Petrov's defection, the USSR closed its Embassy in Canberra on 29 April 1954 and expelled the Australian Legation from Moscow.²⁰⁵ Relations between the Soviet Union and Australia ended and remained suspended for a period of five years resuming only on 2 June 1959. Thus, during the period of the IGY, when international scientific cooperation was supposed to be most intense, Australia and the USSR had no official channels of communication. Any necessary communication had to be conducted through a third party, usually the British Foreign Office.

Australian External Affairs Minister Richard Gardiner Casey's view of the communists matched those of his Prime Minister. Casey compared the communist threat to Australia to an octopus with its head in Moscow or Peking and tentacles reaching out to southern Asia and Australia.²⁰⁶ With a Soviet presence in the

²⁰³ Ball, D. and D. Horner 1998. *Breaking the codes. Australia's KGB network, 1944 - 1950*. St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin: 125; The Soviet minister, later ambassador, Andrei Vlasov presented his credentials in Canberra on 10 March 1943.

²⁰⁴ Petrov, V & E. 1956. *Empire of fear*. London: Andre Deutsch: 335-339; Manne, R. 1987 *The Petrov affair*. Melbourne: The Text publishing company: 152-175.

²⁰⁵ Manne, R. 1987. *The Petrov affair*. Melbourne: The Text publishing company: 121.

²⁰⁶ Lowe, D. 1999. *Menzies. The great world struggle. Australia's Cold War 1948-1954*. Sydney: University of NSW: 84.

Antarctic 'from which they could drop missiles on Melbourne or Sydney',²⁰⁷ the tentacles would have Australia completely in their grasp. Clearly, the presence of a potentially inimical power on the southern continent that had the ability to control southern sea routes and encircle Australia with military bases and gain intelligence as to defence installations by flying over Australian territory was not a desirable eventuality. The Australian government would have preferred to prevent the USSR from having any involvement in the Antarctic whatsoever, so as to eliminate any possible detrimental effect on Australia's territorial and strategic interests.

The main reason that held the Australian government back from pursuing such a course of action was the probability of incurring international odium by being obstructionist of the Soviet IGY plans. Casey, who was responsible for Antarctic matters, told the Australian Cabinet of Ministers that there were no effective means of preventing Russian activity in the Australian Antarctic Territory and that no means whereby they could be prevented had been suggested from any quarter. The most that Australia could do would be to refuse any facilities they may request, although it would be unusual in international practice to refuse transit rights and servicing facilities to a state ship and a state aircraft. Instead, Cabinet agreed that Casey should make a public statement welcoming the Soviets to the Australian Antarctic Territory to make their scientific observations.²⁰⁸ By welcoming the Soviets, Australia would remind them that they were indeed entering Australian Antarctic Territory.

However, before issuing a public welcome, a meeting of the Defence Committee held on 25 August 1955 attended by the Secretary of the Defence Department Sir Frederick Shedden, Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Sir John McCauley, Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral R. R. Dowling and Major General H.G. Edgar, representing Chief of the General Staff, assessed the defence implications of Soviet participation in the IGY. The meeting came to the conclusion that during the IGY it would be of value to observe the extent of Soviet activities and

²⁰⁷ Casey cited in Griffiths, T. 2007. *Slicing the silence. Voyaging to Antarctica*. Sydney: University of NSW: 139.

²⁰⁸ Casey, R. 1956. For Cabinet. Antarctic research - Soviet request for facilities. 19 January 1956, Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 2.

that 'at the present time when world tension is relaxing',²⁰⁹ there would be no justifiable defence objection to the use of airports and harbours in Australia by the Soviet expedition. Should world tension increase, however, the possibility of the clandestine introduction of nuclear weapons into Australian ports from ships and aircraft would have to be borne in mind.²¹⁰ It was considered unlikely for the USSR to attack Australia from the Antarctic, but if, at the conclusion of the IGY, the Soviets gave indications of retaining their bases in Antarctica, consideration might be given to depriving them of the use of support bases on the Australian mainland.²¹¹ The meeting recommended further discussions between the Departments of Trade and Customs, External Affairs and Air to determine methods of preventing Russian aircraft from photographing Australian areas of defence importance. The Departments of Civil Aviation, Shipping, and Transport were asked to prepare information concerning ports and civil airports for use by the IGY expeditions in Australia.

Because the Australian government was unable to communicate directly with the USSR Government due to the rupture in diplomatic relations, communication was conducted through the British Embassy in Moscow, which on 29 August 1955 delivered a message from the Australian government to the government of the USSR stating that it welcomed the interest of other countries in the International Geophysical Year and would be happy to consider what facilities it could provide to any expeditions seeking to increase scientific knowledge of the Antarctic.²¹² The wording of the note was an attempt by Australia to gain acknowledgement of its Antarctic claim from the recipients, as well as to place itself in a strong bargaining position regarding the terms for granting the required facilities. It hoped to make easier the government's supervision of any foreign ships and aircraft and provide the ability to hamper Soviet activity after the IGY if their expedition became dependent on Australia for logistic support. It was decided that if the Soviets were to utilize

²⁰⁹ Defence Committee 1955. Minute by Defence Committee at meeting held on 25 August, 1955. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A2031, 182/1955.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² British Embassy Moscow 1955, 29 August. Letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR from British Embassy Moscow 29 August 1955. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/5 part 1.

Australian harbours, it would be an 'excellent opportunity to find what they are up to as well as some degree of control over their lines of supply.'²¹³

Australia heard nothing further about Soviet preparations for an Antarctic expedition until early September, when the Department of External Affairs received a translation of an *Izvestiya* article from a Russian émigré living in Brisbane. The article reported that a 'Soviet expedition will leave in November 1955 in the specially equipped ship *Ob* (12,600 tons), which is able to travel among polar ice, and an auxiliary vessel.'²¹⁴ Six days later, on 8 September, the Australian Embassy in Paris reported a comment of the Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune* in a memo addressed to the secretary of the Department of External Affairs. The comment noted that 'Moscow radio said today a Soviet scientific expedition with two ships and a "special air fleet" will leave in November for a two-year stay in the Antarctic.'²¹⁵

The USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (again via the British Embassy) sent an official note to the Australian government on 2 November, omitting any reference to the AAT. It stated that the Australian government would help the work of the Soviet expedition in the Antarctic appreciably by permitting the flight over Australian territory and the servicing at Freemantle (sic) Airport of one of the expedition's transport aircraft. This would allow maintaining an air link between the shore base of the Soviet Antarctic Expedition of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and Moscow. It concluded by saying that the work of the expedition would be considerably lightened if the Soviet Antarctic expedition ship were provided with the necessary servicing in the event of its calling at one of the ports of Australia or Tasmania (sic), but provided no specific details regarding dates and ports of call.²¹⁶

²¹³ Kevin, J. C. G. 1955. To P. Law. Savingram 28 September 1955, 170 Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 1495/1/9/4 part 2.

²¹⁴ Rudakov 1955. Letter to the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs. 2 September 1955. Canberra: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 2.

²¹⁵ *New York Herald Tribune*, 8 September 1955.

²¹⁶ USSR 1955. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Note to the British Embassy. 2 November 1955, Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 2.

Before acknowledging the Soviet note, the Assistant Secretary of the Department of External Affairs J. C. G. Kevin contacted the British Embassy in Moscow on 14 December to clarify the Soviet intentions and check on progress of their expedition. He asked to be advised if the Soviet ships *Ob* (already en route to Antarctica) and *Lena* (due to sail) or any Soviet expedition aircraft proposed to call at an Australian port, explaining that the Australians would not wish to be embarrassed by any such call in advance of their reply. The Defence Committee had suggested that a tab of Soviet activity be kept not only during the IGY, but also in advance of it, and Kevin had started gathering information. He conveyed the Minister's view that any facilities granted would be only during the IGY, adding that the Americans also wanted to ensure that the main Soviet interest is 'connected with the IGY and is limited in its duration.'²¹⁷ Kevin received no clarification of Soviet intentions or advice as to the timetable of any proposed visits and apparently did not provide an official answer to the Soviet note. While Australia had agreed in principle to a possible visit by the Soviet Antarctic expedition, it had very little knowledge of the entity with which it would be dealing.

3.6 The Soviet Antarctic expedition

The final plans and research program for the first composite Soviet Antarctic expedition (SAE) were ratified by the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences on 18 November 1955 in Decree No 600.²¹⁸ The Deputy Director of the Arctic Institute, Dr. Mikhail Mikhailovich Somov, who was a prominent Arctic researcher and leader of the *Severny Polus 2* (North Pole 2) drifting station, was appointed leader both of the overall 1955 - 1957 SAE and its continental expedition component. The second in charge of the SAE and Head of the Marine Expedition was the Director of the Institute of Oceanography, Prof Vladimir Georgievich Kort.²¹⁹ Many of the USSR's

²¹⁷ Kevin, J. C. G. 1955. Antarctica. From Kevin, Canberra. To Secretary of the Department of External Affairs Melbourne. 14 December 1955. Canberra: National Archives of Australia A 1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 2.

²¹⁸ Kort, V. 1958. *Tseli ezpeditsii i ee podgotovka* [Aims of the expedition and its preparation], In Bardin, I. (Ed). *Opisanie ekspeditsii na dizel/elektrohode Ob 1955- 1956* [Description of the expedition on board the diesel/electric ship Ob 1955-1957]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 8.

²¹⁹ Bardin, I. (Ed). 1958. *Opisanie ekspeditsii na dizel elektrohode Ob 1955-1956* [Description of the expedition on board the diesel/electric ship Ob 1955-1957]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 5.

highly qualified scientists, most experienced polar pilots, navigators and Arctic men were diverted from their work in the North Polar region to apply their skills and knowledge in pioneering studies and infrastructure development in the South. Four hundred and twenty nine people participated in the first SAE, including the ships' crew and the building brigade. Although the USSR had limited experience in conducting research in the Antarctic before 1956, (except that carried out by Russia during Bellingshausen's expedition and on the Soviet *Slava* whaling fleet) it believed that it had the capacity in terms of human and logistic resources to fulfil its Antarctic program.

Two of the USSR's most modern icebreakers and a support vessel were fitted out especially for the expedition: the 12,600-ton high deck sister ships *Ob* (Captain I. A. Man) and *Lena* (Captain A. I. Vetrov) which were both built in Holland specifically for conducting research in Polar regions,²²⁰ and the support vessel *Refrigerator 7* (Captain M. A. Tsigankov) which had recently returned from 'mothering' an ocean-going submarine on a secret 24,000 mile round trip from Murmansk in the Soviet Arctic to the Antarctic.²²¹ The Directorate of the Northern Sea Route had serious plans of extensively utilizing long-range submarine transport in the Soviet Arctic,²²² and the Australian observers feared that if the Soviets were playing a double game in the Antarctic, they could readily turn their station *Mirny* into a submarine base for the delivery of atomic weapons.²²³

²²⁰ Dubrovin, L. and V. Tkachev 1975. Flagmanu Sovetskikh Antarkticheskikh ekspeditsiy *Ob* 20 let [The twentieth anniversary of the *Ob* – the flagship of the Soviet Antarctic expeditions]. *Informatsionniy Bulletin Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi Ekspeditsii* [Information bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic expedition] 90: 110.

²²¹ In early 1955 'a Soviet submarine made a rendezvous with the *Slava* whaling fleet in the Antarctic. Commanded by Captain T.N. Lozovsky, the submarine, one of the Soviet's latest long-range W-type, snorkel-equipped, left in January 1955 from Murmansk in the Barents Sea in the North of Russia and proceeded via the Atlantic to the Antarctic without being observed. Here the *Slava's* engineers overhauled the submarine, which was refueled by a tanker sent for the purpose. When they arrived back in Murmansk in May the crew were welcomed by Admiral Chobanenkov, Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Northern Fleet and were all awarded decorations' (Did you know, 1958, *Antarctic*, NZ, June: 280).

²²² Maksimov, I. 1945. Dokladnaya zapiska zamestitelyu nachalnika Glavsevmorputi pri SNK SSSR V. Novikovu Sentyabr 1945 [Report to the Deputy Director of Glavsevmorput at the Council of the People's Commissars, V. Novikov, September 1945]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv sotsialno politicheskoi istorii [Russian State Archives for Social and Political History] RGASPI, File 475, op 1, d 43: 193- 213.

²²³ What are the Russians up to at *Mirny*? *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 March 1957.

When the *Ob* reached its destination at the Antarctic continent on 5 January 1956, the first impression was far from favourable. Dr. G. A. Avsiuk, a geographer, reported that 'the sector which we were allotted (Farr Bay, 66° 28' S, 94° 43' E) was not to our liking as there was no place to go ashore, but we liked the area to the west where the Australians were planning their operations. We even sent a telegram thinking that there must have been some mistake and asked whether it was possible to land there.'²²⁴

After finding a less difficult place to land, the ships could finally be unloaded and building work could begin. In their progress report, the president of the Academy of Sciences, N. Nesmeyanov, and the Minister of the Merchant Fleet, V. Bakayev, wrote that on the 13 February 1956 the flag of the USSR was raised at the first Soviet geophysical observatory *Mirny* (66° 33' S, 93° 00' E). It is most significant that a box containing earth from the city of Stalingrad (the battle for which was a turning point in defending the USSR from the Nazi invasion) was buried under the flagpole. By mixing the bloodstained Stalingrad soil with the soil of the Antarctic continent, the Soviets were in effect forming an intimate connection between their motherland and the icy southern land, much the same as the symbolic mixing of blood by friends who create ties of quasi-kinship by becoming 'blood brothers'. The flag of the USSR was to be planted in its own soil. Glaciologist Leonid Dolgushin, who was present at the flag-raising, saw this as indicating that the Soviet Union's intentions in Antarctica were 'serious and long-lasting'.²²⁵ By the end of the year, a substantial base for conducting scientific research was created in Eastern Antarctica. Magnetic, seismic, ionospheric, aerological, geological and glaciological pavilions were built and equipped; and gravimagnetic, aerophotogrametric and photographic laboratories were fitted out at the *Mirny* observatory.

²²⁴ Glavsevmorput 1956. Stenogramma soveschaniya u nachalnika GSMP Burhanov, 10 Aprelya 1956. Informatsiya pribivshih iz Antarktiki tov. Avsyuk, Shumskiy i Markov [Transcript of the meeting with Burhanov, Chief of the Main Directorate of the Northern Sea Route. Information provided by Avsyuk, Shumskiy and Markov, 10 April 1956]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economic Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2583.

²²⁵ Dolgushin, L. 2006. *Antarktida 1955-1957. Fotorasskaz o pervoi Sovetskoj ekspeditsii v Antarktiku i zimovke na pervoi vnutrikontinentalnoi stantsii Pionerskaya* [Antarctica 1955-1957. A photographic account of the first Soviet Antarctic expedition and wintering at the first inner continental station Pionerskaya]. Moscow: Published by author: 44.

With the aid of aircraft, the expedition surveyed over 2,000 kilometres of coastline, took aerial photographs over an area of 60,000 square kilometres, undertook a comprehensive study of the Eastern Antarctic oases, studied the geology of exposed rock in areas around *Mirny*, made aeromagnetic surveys of the oases and large areas of coastline as well as gravimetric observations.²²⁶ Air reconnaissance flights to the South Geomagnetic Pole and in the direction of the Pole of Inaccessibility were also undertaken. For the first time in the history of Antarctic exploration in the autumn/winter season of 1956, the expedition undertook a tractor-sledge traverse into the interior of the continent which resulted in the establishment of the research station *Pionerskaya* (69° 44'S, 95° 30' E) on 27 May 1956 at a site located 375 kilometres from the coast at an altitude of 2,700 metres above sea level. The research station *Oasis* (66° 16'S, 100° 44' E) was established 360 kilometres to the east of *Mirny* earlier than planned and was officially opened on 15 October 1956. During its stay in Antarctica, the expedition established close and friendly contacts with foreign Antarctic expeditions: the Soviet observatory *Mirny* regularly exchanged scientific information with the French, Australian, US and British stations.²²⁷

3.7 Contacts with Australian scientists

Contact with Australian scientists was initiated by the leader of the composite Soviet Antarctic expedition, Dr. Somov around lunchtime on 25 January 1956.²²⁸ In a radiogram to the Australian *Mawson* station, Somov greeted the Officer-in-Charge John M. Bechervaise, wished the Australians success in their IGY work and suggested the 'mutual exchange of meteorological information.'²²⁹ Bechervaise radioed a return greeting, replying that he would be happy to exchange data. The Soviets knew and respected the Australians' prior experience in the Antarctic:

²²⁶ Nesmeyanov, N. and V. Bakayev 1957. *Kratkiye itogi raboty kontinentalnoi chasti kompleksnoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii AN SSSR 1955-1957* [A brief summary of the results of the continental component of the CAE of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR 1955-1957, 3 June 1957]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives] RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2589.

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Bechervaise, J. 1957. *Diaries 1955-1956*. Typewritten. Australia, Kingston: Australian Antarctic Division. Library Special Collection: 543.

²²⁹ Ibid, 544.

Douglas Mawson's *The Home of the Blizzard* was translated and first published in Russian by Glavsevmorput in 1935; his descriptions and charts had assisted them in their search for a suitable site for a coastal base.

On the same day, the Australian supply ship *Kista Dan* was passing the Knox Coast on its way to *Mawson* station. On board was Phillip G Law, the Director of the Antarctic Division of the Department of External Affairs, and Voyage Leader. Law sent his greetings to Somov, expressing his desire of exchanging information and intention of visiting the site of the Soviet base, weather and ice permitting. The next day, Somov replied that he would be happy to see Law on board the *Ob*. Radiograms were exchanged over the next several days until 29 January when the *Kista Dan* found itself near *Mirny* in heavy ice conditions. The veteran Arctic pilot and head of the Soviet air support group Ivan Ivanovich Cherevichniy (1909 - 1971) flew an IL-2 aircraft one hundred miles from shore to meet the *Kista Dan* at night.²³⁰ In the early morning of 30 January, the *Kista Dan* dropped anchor off *Mirny* and a Soviet launch transferred Law and his assistant Dick Thompson to the *Ob*, where they met Dr. Somov, Prof. Kort and Captain Man, who acted as interpreter. They held lengthy discussions about their scientific programs: Antarctic weather; techniques of landing and building stations.

On the night of 31 January - 1 February the *Kista Dan* set out from *Mirny* for *Mawson* station, but at 15.30 hours on 1 February, it ran into pack ice and bad weather, leaving it cut off from open water and beset in ice for ten days. On 7 February 1956, Law received a radiogram from the *Lena*, which was in a position north-west of the *Kista Dan*, offering to help them out of the ice. Law thanked *Lena's* captain, but declined the offer: he was sure that the Australians could manage without assistance once the storm abated.²³¹ However, the *Kista Dan* reached open water only on 11 February; and on 2 March, (when they were already at *Mawson*, where they arrived on 17 February) Law received an offer of help from *Mirny* since the Russians believed that the Australians were still trapped in ice. They supposed that the Australians had refused the earlier offer because there would be a cost

²³⁰ Cherevichniy, I. 1963. *V nebe Antarktidi [In the Antarctic Sky]*. Moscow: Morskoi Transport (Marine Transport Press): 51-54.

²³¹ Law, P. 1995. *You have to be lucky. Antarctic and other adventures*. Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press: 92.

involved and pointed out that 'the help will be free of charge in sign of friendship between our expeditions (sic).'²³² The spirit of cooperation and the 'single-minded devotion to science' promoted by the IGY committee looked as if it were bearing fruit, with scientists from both sides of the iron curtain freely interacting and sharing information.

The spirit of cooperation of the Australian government, however, was somewhat lacklustre: it had not yet replied to the request for facilities on the Australian mainland as outlined in the Soviet note of 2 November. This was a source of frustration for the Soviet expeditioners. In their discussions with Law, they expressed concern at the delay in obtaining approval for one of their long-range aircraft needed to assist with the establishment of the inland stations to use the airfield facilities at Perth for the proposed Perth – *Mirny* flight, and asked him whether any reply had been sent. Law told them that he knew that a request had been received, but did not know if a reply had been sent. In fact, the Australian government had intentionally not sent a reply: it sought to discourage any Soviet visits which could allow the visitors to obtain strategic intelligence. It was also showing its displeasure at not being provided with specific details as to when and where the Soviet vessels intended to call. While Australia could not completely deny normal servicing facilities to a country with which it was still technically in a relationship, it intended to provide no more than the assistance that fell within the limits of the Australian government's replies to the Soviet note of granting strictly 'necessary facilities' to their vessels.

The Australian government was also interested in whether the Soviet Antarctic base was built for purely scientific purposes or whether it showed any signs of military related activity. The Department of External Affairs presented Law with 'four foolscap pages of questions' that they wanted answered about *Mirny* station.²³³ Law furnished a detailed report of his visit, describing the station's site, huts, transport, scientific program and Russian policy in Antarctica. He felt that the Soviet scientific personnel were of high calibre and the scientific program comprehensive,

²³² Law, P. 1995. *You have to be lucky. Antarctic and other adventures*. Kenthurst: Kangaroo Press: 92.

²³³ Ralston, K. 1998. *Phillip Law. The Antarctic Exploration years, 1954-1956*. Canberra: Department of Finance and Administration: 71.

thoroughly planned and backed by adequate resources. He believed that the expedition will 'gain international prestige and provide valuable propaganda to substantiate Russia's claim to be in the forefront of world science.'²³⁴ As for any signs of military activity, he noted that while the expedition appeared to be civilian and non-military, pure (as opposed to applied) scientific research conducted by the Soviets in areas such as oceanography could enable naval experts to extract information whether a submarine base in Antarctica would be a feasible proposition.²³⁵

Feasible or not, the Soviet position expressed in its note of 2 June 1958 that '[t]he Antarctic should be used by all countries exclusively for peaceful purposes; this implies ... that no military bases should be set up in the Antarctic...' ²³⁶ confirmed that the USSR was interested in upholding the principle of the non military use of Antarctica as an essential prerequisite for any international regime.

3.8 Conclusion

So far as the spirit of the IGY was concerned, the Soviets appeared sincere in their efforts at cooperation, although the lack of diplomatic relations and Cold War tensions hindered effective communication between the Soviet and Australian governments and exacerbated suspicions of Soviet motives. It would be naive to assert that science was the sole driving force for the Soviet efforts in preparing for the IGY. Hall observes that science was actually the means for attaining a political end, that of establishing a workable regime for the Antarctic.²³⁷ However, the role of scientists in overcoming their political differences in their efforts at international collaboration to achieve the scientific objectives of the IGY was significant in building good will and friendly relations. The resources in manpower and technology

²³⁴ Law, P. 1956. Report on visit to USSR base at Mirny. Australia, Kingston: Australian Antarctic Division. Library Special Collection: 8.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ USSR 1958. Soviet note of 2 June 1958 to the United States accepting the United States invitation to attend an international conference on Antarctica. In: Bush, W. 1982. *Antarctica and International Law. A Collection of inter-state and National Documents*, vol 3. London-Rome-New York: Ocean Publications Inc.: 212-214.

²³⁷ Hall, R. 1994. International regime formation and leadership. The origins of the Antarctic Treaty, Ph.D. thesis, University of Tasmania: 156.

that the Soviets expended gave an indication of their commitment to a substantial presence in Antarctica, making it impossible to find a satisfactory political solution for a workable Antarctic regime without significant Soviet input. This end was eventually achieved. Although science may have been the means for gaining a political foothold on the Antarctic continent, it would seem that, from a contemporary perspective, the Soviet presence had not been detrimental to arriving at a greater level of international cooperation than was possible by keeping them out.

THE RELUCTANT HOSTS

SOVIET ANTARCTIC EXPEDITION SHIPS VISIT AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND IN 1956²³⁸

The purpose of this chapter is to follow the ships of the first composite Soviet Antarctic expedition of 1955 - 1957 on their voyage from the USSR to the Antarctic continent and on their return journey via Macquarie Island, New Zealand and Australia in order to highlight the contacts that the Soviet expedition staff encountered during the visits. These contacts occurred at the beginning of intensive Soviet activity in Antarctica in a period of cold war tension and unresolved Antarctic territorial claims and were the forerunners of future efforts to lay the foundation for an international regime for the South Polar region in which the USSR was a major participant.

At the time, the Anglo-American world, which obviously included Australia and New Zealand, was gripped by suspicion and fear of the Soviet communist menace and adhered to a policy of containing perceived Soviet expansionism. Attempts by the Soviet Union to forge cordial international relations were seen as having a sinister purpose, in the words of the Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies 'to make more swift and certain the defeat of the democracies.'²³⁹ While the Soviet scientists appeared serious in their overtures to create cordial relations in keeping with the non-political scientific purposes of the IGY, fear of possible ulterior motives and of their intention to establish bases in the sector of the Antarctic continent claimed by Australia led to a reluctance on the part of the Australian government to develop closer links with the Soviet expedition. This chapter devotes particular attention to the unenthusiastic attitude of the Australian and New Zealand governments to visits by the Soviet ships to their ports. The attitude of both governments was strikingly similar for several obvious reasons. They were close

²³⁸ This chapter is based on a paper which was published in *Polar Record* 45 (232): 37-50 (2009).

²³⁹ Quoted in Meaney, N. 1985. *Australia and the world. A documentary history from the 1870s to the 1970s*. Melbourne: Longman Cheshire: 600.

neighbours, with a common British heritage; they were both members of the Commonwealth and they were both claimants to Antarctic territory; they shared similar geo-strategic interests and were fellow signatories together with the United States of the Australia, New Zealand and United States (ANZUS) treaty; and they shared the same cold war concerns about the Soviet threat. This chapter further examines the differing attitudes of the two governments and their respective scientific communities to the Soviet expedition and emphasises the interest in the work of the expedition shown by Australia's most eminent Antarctic scientist and explorer, Sir Douglas Mawson.

Information was obtained from the diaries and monographs published in Russian by the prolific scientific secretary of the Marine Expedition (E. Suzyumov, 1908 - 1998), the leader of the Marine Expedition (Professor V. Kort, 1913 - 1994) and the captain of the flagship and main oceanographic research vessel *Ob* (I. Man, 1903 - 1982). These papers are found in an anthology edited by I. Bardin entitled *Opisanie ekspeditsii na d/e 'Ob' 1955–1956 [An account of the expedition on the diesel/electric ship 'Ob' 1955–1956]*²⁴⁰ and in Suzyumov's book *K shestomu materiku [To the sixth continent]*.²⁴¹ Russian language archival material comes largely from the Northern Sea Directorate (Glavsevmorput) section in the State Economic Archives in Moscow and from expedition reports in the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute in St Petersburg. The Australian perspective on the expedition was gleaned from the correspondence files in the National Archives of Australia (NAA) in Canberra; the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) Library special collection in Kingston, Tasmania, and the South Australian Museum Mawson Antarctic Collection in Adelaide, South Australia. These files also contain correspondence between the Australian and New Zealand High Commissions that shed light on New Zealand attitudes.

²⁴⁰ Bardin, I. (Ed). 1958. *Opisanie ekspeditsii na dizel-electrohode Ob 1955–1956 [An account of the expedition on the diesel/electric ship 'Ob' 1955–1956]*. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press), 238 p.

²⁴¹ Suzyumov, E. 1958. *K shestomu materiku [To the sixth continent]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press), 348p.

4.1 The first composite Soviet Antarctic expedition

The first composite Soviet Antarctic expedition was established by a decree of the Council of Ministers of the USSR on 13 July 1955 and comprised a continental and a marine component. It was headed by the Deputy Director of the USSR Arctic Research Institute, Dr. M. Somov (1908 - 1973) who was also leader of the continental component (Fig. 10).



Fig.10. Left to right: the head of the Soviet Antarctic expedition M. Somov and captain of *Ob*, I. Man. Photo by A. Less (Archives of Film and Photo Documents, Krasnogorsk, Russia).

The leader of the marine component and second in command of the whole expedition was Professor V. Kort. The expedition was assigned three vessels: the icebreaker sister ships *Ob* (captained by I. Man), *Lena* (captained by A. Vetrov) and the support vessel *Refrigerator 7* (captained by M. Tsigankov).

The flagship and main oceanographic research vessel was *Ob*, which on 20 August 1955 entered the Riga plant of the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet of the USSR, headed by G. Zadorozhniy, to spend three months undergoing a major refit as an oceanographic research vessel. This included the installation of navigation and communication systems, winches, and the construction of passenger cabins and

laboratories.²⁴² According to a decree of the chief of Glavsevmorput, V. Burhanov (1908 - 1982), issued on 11 November 1955, the expedition was to load at Kaliningrad and to depart from that port on 30 November 1955.²⁴³

However, due to the scope of the proposed work, three months was insufficient for it to be completed, and construction continued *en route* to the Antarctic.²⁴⁴ *Ob* arrived in Kaliningrad from Riga on 22 November, five days later than was planned,²⁴⁵ consequently reducing the time for loading from fourteen days to nine. Space on both the vessels was at a premium: 'each place on the *Ob* and *Lena* was worth its weight in gold - all the cabins were filled to the brim: there were about three times too many people on board', recalled V. Hodirev, the fourth officer/electric radio navigator on *Lena* and future mayor of Leningrad.²⁴⁶ Besides the crew, *Ob* carried the main contingent of the marine expedition, some personnel of the continental expedition and the building brigade as well as journalists and filmmakers who were to report on the expedition. Most of the participants were Communist Party members, some of whom were entrusted with the task of ensuring that all voyagers adhered to party discipline at all times. There was at least one of these highly influential political officers on each vessel. A crowded pre-departure meeting was held on the wharf at Kaliningrad, at which Burhanov delivered a farewell address.

²⁴² Kort, V. 1958. Tseli ezpeditsii i ee podgotovka [Aims of the expedition and its preparation]. In Bardin, I. (Ed). *Opisanie ekspeditsii na dizel/elektrohode Ob 1955-1956* [Description of the expedition on board the diesel/electric ship Ob 1955-1956]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 9.

²⁴³ Burhanov, V. 1955. Prikaz nachalnika Glavnogo Upravleniya SMP MMF SSSR No 223 ot 11 Noyabria 1955 o vyhode v reis KAE [Decree of the Head of the Main Directorate of the Northern Sea Route of the USSR Merchant Navy Ministry in reference to the departure of the CAE]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2 ed hr 2579(3).

²⁴⁴ Glavsevmorput 1956. Stenogramma soveshchaniya u nachalnika GSMP Burhanova, 10 Aprelya 1956. Informatsiya pribivshih iz Antarktiki tov. Avsyuk, Shumskiy i Markov [Transcript of the meeting with Burhanov, Head of the Main Directorate of the Northern Sea Route. Information provided by Avsyuk, Shumskiy and Markov, 10 April 1956]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2583: 146.

²⁴⁵ Burhanov, V. 1955. Prikaz nachalnika Glavnogo Upravleniya SMP MMF SSSR No 223 ot 11 Noyabria 1955 o vyhode v reis KAE [Decree of the Head of the Main Directorate of the Northern Sea Route of the USSR Naval Ministry in reference to the departure of the CAE, 11 November]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2 ed hr 2579(3).

²⁴⁶ Strugatskiy, V. 2006. Polusa Vladimira Hodireva [The Poles of Vladimir Hodirev]. *Smena*, St Petersburg, 20 February: 10.

The departure was extensively covered in the media with magazine and newspaper articles and newsreels which were shown in cinemas; a short 1955 documentary film by G. Zakharova and A. Istomin *The Soviet Antarctic expedition departs for Antarctica*²⁴⁷ briefly outlining the Soviet plans and preparations for departure was widely distributed. According to the captain, *Ob* finally departed at 18.00 hours on 1 December 1955,²⁴⁸ although a departure date of 30 November has been repeated many times in both Russian and English language expedition literature.²⁴⁹

After *Ob*'s departure, intensive preparations for *Lena*'s voyage south commenced under the direction of the deputy chief of Glavsevmorput, E. Tolstikov (1913 - 1987) (who later headed the third Soviet Antarctic expedition in 1957 - 1959) and were completed by Burhanov.²⁵⁰ *Lena* was intended to conduct some of the scientific observations²⁵¹ and to carry out subsidiary research work. Her cargo and personnel started arriving in Kaliningrad while she was still in Riga, at which port she arrived on the 7 December²⁵² instead of 1 December, as was planned.²⁵³ 'There

²⁴⁷ Sovetskaya ekspeditsia otpravlyaetsia v Antarktiku 1955 [The Soviet Antarctic Expedition Departs for Antarctica]. Documentary film by G. Zakharova and A. Istomin. Krasnogorsk, Moscow region, Russia: Russian State Archives of Film and Photo Document [RGAKFD].

²⁴⁸ Man, I. 1958. Plavanie ekspeditsii, raboty po organizatsii observatorii *Mirny* i harakteristika usloviy pogody [The expedition voyage, construction of *Mirny* and weather observations] In Bardin, I. (Ed). *Opisanie ekspeditsii na dizel/elektrohode Ob 1955-1956* [An account of the expedition on the diesel/electric ship *Ob* 1955-1957]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 17.

²⁴⁹ Suzyumov, E. 1958. *K shestomu materiku* [To the sixth continent]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 5; Nudelman, A. 1959. *Sovetskie ekspeditsii v Antarktiku 1955-1959* [Soviet expeditions to Antarctica 1955-1959]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 8.

²⁵⁰ Korotkevich, E. 1956. Otchet o rabotah ekspeditsionnoi gruppy KAE AN SSSR na d/e *Lena* 14.12.1955-20.01.1956 [Reports of the expedition group of the USSR Academy of Sciences on board the diesel/electric ship *Lena* 14.12.1955-20.01.1956]. St Petersburg, Russia: Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute: Fondi: 2.

²⁵¹ Somov, M. 1959. *Pervaya Kontinentalnaya Ekspeditsia 1955-1957. Obschee opisanie* [The First Continental Expedition 1955 - 1957. A general account]. Leningrad: Morskoi Transport (Marine Transport Press): 11.

²⁵² Korotkevich, E. 1956. Otchet o rabotah ekspeditsionnoi gruppy KAE AN SSSR na d/e *Lena* 14.12.1955-20.01.1956 [Reports of the expedition group of the USSR Academy of Sciences on board the diesel/electric ship *Lena* 14.12.1955-20.01.1956]. St Petersburg, Russia: Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute: Fondi: 2.

²⁵³ Burhanov, V. 1955. Prikaz nachalnika Glavnogo Upravleniya SMP MMF SSSR No 223 ot 11 Noyabrya 1955 o vyhode v reis KAE [Decree of the Head of the Main Directorate of the Northern Sea

was a lot of cargo, more than expected, and we had to leave behind some timber, fuel containers, tractor sledges, and diesel fuel ordered in Rotterdam', wrote the geographer E. Korotkevich.²⁵⁴ *Lena* left port on 14 December fully loaded with 4250 tons of cargo and its contingent of crew, members of the continental and marine expeditions and part of the building brigade.²⁵⁵ The refrigerator-class support vessel *Refrigerator 7* sailed from Riga the next day loaded with 313 tons of perishables.

Ob arrived in Cape Town on 24 December 1955, where she was boarded by members of the Soviet consulate who were accompanied by the Czechoslovak consul, J. Patek, and greeted by masses of Christmas Eve revellers who came to the pier to see the Soviet icebreaker. The revellers were eager to talk and ask questions, although they were not allowed on board due to loading operations and time constraints. Contrasting with the revellers were what the expedition's scientific secretary, Suzyumov, took to be two policemen in khaki parading up and down the wharf in this 'reactionary capitalist country'. The Soviets were particularly anxious to display their loathing of the concept of apartheid and solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the world. They pointedly invited the indigenous South African port workers to lunch in the ship's mess and allowed them full freedom to move about the ship, much to the annoyance of the 'parading policemen.' The final straw for these custodians of the law was when the ship's loudspeakers began broadcasting the peace songs of the well-known African American singer, civil rights activist and very good friend of the Soviet Union, Paul Robeson. According to Suzyumov, one of them ran off to report this latest provocation to his superiors.²⁵⁶

The only representative of an official scientific body to visit the ship was an officer from the South African meteorological service, A. Crawford, of Tristan da

Route of the USSR Naval Ministry in reference to the departure of the CAE]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2 ed hr 2579(3).

²⁵⁴ Korotkevich, E. 1956. Otchet o rabotah ekspeditsionnoi gruppy KAE AN SSSR na d/e *Lena* 14.12.1955- 20.01.1956 [Reports of the expedition group of the USSR Academy of Sciences on board the diesel/electric ship *Lena* 14.12.1955-20.01.1956]. St Petersburg, Russia: Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute: Fondi: 2.

²⁵⁵ Denisov, I. and G. Bregman 1959. Kalendar kompleksnoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii [Chronicle of the CAE]. In: Burhanov, V (Ed.) *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle [On the far south land]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 437.

²⁵⁶ Suzyumov, E. 1958. *K shestomu materiku [To the sixth continent]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 61-62.

Cunha fame, who brought meteorological reference books as gifts to the Soviet expedition and shared his knowledge of the scientific bases and expeditions that were working in Antarctica at the time. He invited the Soviet meteorologists L. Sobolev and R. Usmanov to the meteorological observatory in Cape Town where the Russians offered to provide continuing meteorological data to the observatory. The local press, in a piece entitled 'Russians spring a surprise', later called this exchange a positive sign of scientific cooperation between the two countries.²⁵⁷ In 1958 the South Africans presented *Ob* with a framed artistic photograph of Table Mountain in appreciation of this cooperation.²⁵⁸ The stay in Cape Town was so short that the crew and expedition staff had insufficient time to rest before their departure for the Antarctic.²⁵⁹

The impression from all reports is that time was of the essence: summer was well advanced and *Ob* needed to reach its destination before winter conditions set in. So the ship proceeded at maximum speed and all four diesel electric engines were utilised to achieve an average speed of almost fourteen knots.²⁶⁰ The ship arrived in Farr Bay (also known as Depot Bay) on 5 January 1956. After conducting air reconnaissance of the area to the west, it was decided to establish a base on an area of the Antarctic continent in Queen Mary Land near Haswell Islet. The coast between the West Ice Shelf and the Shackleton Ice Shelf (between King Leopold Astrid and Queen Astrid Coast and Knox Coast) was named the Pravda Coast after *Pravda* [truth/justice], the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet

²⁵⁷ Suzyumov, E. 1957. Mezhdunarodnye nauchnye svyazi expedititsii [International scientific relations of the expedition]. In: *Sovetskie issledovaniya v Antarktike* [Soviet research in the Antarctic]. Moscow: Znanie: 57, 58; *Russians spring a surprise* 1955. *The Cape Argus*, Cape Town, 28 December: 1.

²⁵⁸ Kort, V. 1958. Tretiya Morskaya Antarkticheskaya Expedititsia. Otchet o rabote 3 MAE na d/e *Ob*. Chast II [Third Marine Antarctic Expedition. Reports of the 3rd MAE on board the diesel/electric ship *Ob*. Part II]. St Petersburg, Russia: Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute: Fondi: 300.

²⁵⁹ Somov, M. 1959. *Pervaya Kontinentalnaya Expedititsia 1955-1957. Obshee opisanie* [The First Continental Expedition 1955 - 1957. A general account]. Leningrad: Morskoi Transport (Marine Transport Press): 11.

²⁶⁰ Man, I. 1958. Plavanie expedititsii, raboty po organizatsii observatorii *Mirny* i harakteristika usloviy pogody [The expedition voyage, construction of *Mirny* and weather observations] In Bardin, I. (Ed). *Opisanie expedititsii na dizel/elektrohode Ob 1955-1956* [An account of the expedition on the diesel/electric ship *Ob* 1955-1957]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 17.

Union.²⁶¹ This name has remained on Soviet maps and atlases of Antarctica, including those printed in 1980 and 2005.²⁶²

On 15 January 1956, *Ob* approached the future site of their main continental base *Mirny* and immediately commenced preparations for unloading, which continued round the clock in difficult weather conditions.²⁶³ *Lena* approached Haswell Islet five days after *Ob* on 20 January and the construction of the base commenced on 22 January.²⁶⁴ Unloading *Lena* proceeded slowly and Vetrov decided to move closer to the Pravda shore to unload cargo directly on to the 20 metre-high ice edge, rather than onto the fast ice.²⁶⁵ This was rather a risky manoeuvre due to the very real possibility of the edge collapsing, which did in fact happen several times, notwithstanding the attempts at stabilisation by using explosives to precipitate the collapse of unstable sections. Hodirev later recalled Mawson's remark when they were in Adelaide that 'nobody had ever dared to unload in such a manner.'²⁶⁶ The danger inherent in such a situation led to the ice edge being named the Barrier Otvazhniy, [Barrier of the Courageous] emphasising the pioneering adventurous bravado of the expedition. *Ob* departed from *Mirny* on 28 February to continue its oceanographic observations, whilst *Lena*, which was being used as accommodation during the building of the base, was last to leave on 17 March after staying there

²⁶¹ Dubrovin, L. and M. Preobrazhenskaya 1987. *O chem govorit karta Antarktiki* [What does the map of the Antarctic tell us]. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 127.

²⁶² *Karta Antarktidi 1980* [Map of Antarctica]. At the scale 1:5, 000, 000. Moscow: Based on materials provided by the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet; *Atlas Okeanov. Antartica 2005* [Atlas of the Oceans. Antarctica]. St Petersburg: Russia: Main Directorate of Navigation and Oceanography of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation.

²⁶³ Man, I. 1958. Plavanie ekspeditsii, raboty po organizatsii observatorii *Mirny* i harakteristika usloviy pogody [The expedition voyage, construction of *Mirny* and weather observations] In Bardin, I. (Ed). *Opisanie ekspeditsii na dizel/elektrohode Ob 1955-1956* [An account of the expedition o the diesel/electric ship *Ob* 1955-1957]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press: 20; Nesmeyanov, N. and V. Bakayev 1957. Kratkiye itogi raboty kontinentalnoi chasti kompleksnoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii AN SSSR 1955-1957 [A brief summary of the results of the continental component of the CAE of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR 1955-1957] 3 June 1957. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2589.

²⁶⁴ Denisov, I. and G. Bregman 1959. Kalendar kompleksnoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii [Chronicle of the CAE]. In: *Burhanov* (Ed) *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle* [On the far south land]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 438.

²⁶⁵ Suzyumov, E. 1958. *K shestomu materiku* [To the sixth continent]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 177.

²⁶⁶ Strugatskiy, V. 2006. Polusa Vladimira Hodireva [The Poles of Vladimir Hodirev]. *Smena*, St Petersburg, 21 February: 6.

almost two months. Delaying departure until well past the end of summer was a cause for some concern, since early February is the time during which the ice belt was expected to close. However, a reconnaissance flight towards the north of the Shackleton Ice Shelf assisted in finding a passage for *Lena* through the ice (Fig. 11).



Fig.11. Pilots of the first composite Antarctic expedition in the Kaliningrad port. Second from left is Hero of the Soviet Union I. Cherevichniy. Photo by A. Less (Archives of Film and Photo Documents, Krasnogorsk, Russia).

A party of ninety-two people was left to winter at the newly built base station with Somov as leader.²⁶⁷

4.2 Possible visit of Soviet ships: Australian concerns

Meanwhile, on the Australian mainland, the Australian Broadcasting Commission received a message from Telegraphnoe Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuza [Telegraphic Agency of the Soviet Union], (TASS), on 29 February 1956 that *Ob* had left the Soviet expedition's base at Haswell Islet after spending one and a half months there and was 'at present sailing along the eastern shores of the Antarctic continent for the purpose of studying ocean currents and underwater mountain chains [and] might call at an Australian port during the next three months.'²⁶⁸ The Australian government had as yet received no official advice from the Soviets that

²⁶⁷ Denisov, I. and G. Bregman 1959. Kalendar kompleksnoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii [Chronicle of the composite Antarctic expedition]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed.). *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle* [On the far south land]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 441.

²⁶⁸ Kevin J. C. G. 1956. Russian vessel *Ob*. Letter to the Secretary, Attorney General's department, 14 March 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 3.

Ob would call but 'had to take account of the possibility', wrote Assistant Secretary of the Department of External Affairs (DEA) J.C.G. Kevin on 9 March 1956²⁶⁹ after hearing of the TASS report. He proceeded to inform all interested government departments of the background concerning the exchange of notes between the Australian and USSR governments regarding the Soviet Antarctic expedition. The background to this was that on 29 August 1955, Australia had sent a note to the USSR in which it welcomed the interest of other countries in the IGY and offered to consider any facilities that it could provide to assist any expeditions seeking to increase scientific knowledge of the Antarctic. Australia would have preferred to keep the USSR out of Antarctica, but did not wish to risk international odium by appearing to go against the spirit of cooperation implicit in the IGY, hence the guarded 'welcome'. The note specified that the USSR, which did not recognise any claims for Antarctic territory, was proposing to carry out research in the Australian Antarctic Territory which 'consists of the territory lying between the 45th and 136th meridians of east longitude and between the 142nd and the 160th meridians [east] south of 60th parallel of south latitude.'²⁷⁰

By spelling out its claim, Australia attempted to place the USSR in a position in which the latter was forced at least to acknowledge that a claim had been made, but the ruse was unsuccessful: in its reply, the USSR avoided all reference to the AAT. It simply thanked Australia for the offer and asked that facilities to be provided in Australia for Soviet aircraft or ships involved in Antarctic research as mentioned in the note. Australia replied by asking for details of when it could expect the visits, but did not receive a reply. Kevin, however, set about preparing for an unannounced visit and advised other relevant government departments that it was quite possible that a Soviet ship would arrive without notice at an Australian port and assumed that each of the authorities concerned would apply its own appropriate procedures. One of these authorities, the Marine Branch of the Department of Shipping replied that it had advised its deputies in all states about the likelihood of *Ob* calling. The deputies had been instructed to give the ships every assistance within the limits of the

²⁶⁹ Kevin J. C. G. 1956. Antarctic visit of the *Ob*. Letter to Dr. Wynes, 9 March 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 2.

²⁷⁰ British Embassy Moscow 1955. Letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR from British Embassy Moscow 29 August 1955. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/5 part. 1.

Australian government's reply to the Soviet note and to be strictly correct towards the visitors 'without appearing officious and without giving the impression of trying to please them unduly'²⁷¹ in keeping with the guarded, impartial tone of the reply.

Kevin also wrote to the Attorney General's department seeking its advice on the question of whether the ships were 'to be regarded as public or private vessels and what regulations and administrative procedures could be applied [to them] while they were in Australian ports and waters.'²⁷² This was of importance to the government since there is a vast difference between local laws and regulations in relation to a 'public ship' and a 'private ship'. Public vessels include state-owned vessels, which are on government and non-commercial service, as the Soviet ships were, and international law relating to public vessels is concerned in the main with the extent to which they are entitled to immunity from legal process. Since the ships belonged to a country with whom Australia had no diplomatic relations and was looked on as an adversary in the prevailing Cold War climate prevalent at the time, the Australian government would have preferred to keep a tight rein on Soviet activities on the Australian mainland, even if it could not do so on what it regarded as its own territory in Antarctica.

The preliminary opinion of the Attorney General's department was that the Soviet ships were in fact public vessels and that there were two differing views as to how they should be treated. One was that administrative procedures such as boarding, customs inspection, the making of returns, the obtaining of permits on the payment of taxes (as distinct from paying for services) would be inapplicable to these vessels, whereas the other stated that such a vessel is bound to observe the ordinary laws of the port such as quarantine and sanitary regulations, and not to assist in breaches of local revenue laws. Any failure to respect these laws and regulations would be a ground for diplomatic representations, and possibly for expulsion.²⁷³ The Department of External Affairs would have liked to apply the harsher conditions, but

²⁷¹ Department of External Affairs 1956. Antarctic - visit of *Ob*. Record of conversation with Mr. Burke, Marine branch, Department of Shipping, 9 March 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 2.

²⁷² Kevin, J. C. G. 1956. Russian vessel *Ob*. Letter to the Secretary, Attorney General's department, 14 March 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 3.

²⁷³ Department of External Affairs 1956. Cablegram. To Australian High Commission, London. Confidential, 26 March 1956, Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/4/9 part 3.

was unsure of the finer points of international shipping law, and the search for an unambiguous legal opinion continued.

The Australian authorities were expecting *Ob* to visit an Australian port, as the TASS message of 29 February suggested, but in fact it was *Lena* that arrived in Adelaide on 28 March with 'no prior notification from the Soviet Government'.²⁷⁴ The Australian government was faced with a dilemma: advice from the Attorney General's department indicated that the ship was a public vessel, but a major concern for the government was the limited control that could be exercised over such ship. In a note to the Prime Minister, an unidentified official, possibly from the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) considered different scenarios: if the ship's master would be 'prepared to waive the normal immunities in this case, ASIO's job would be facilitated and certain restrictions could be placed on the crew and passengers'. If, on the other hand, the master claimed that the ship was a public one and refused to submit to controls, were facilities to be extended? 'In this case, awkward political questions could arise, for neither crew nor passengers could be kept under proper surveillance'. The suggestion was made that in view of the proximity of important defence establishments to Adelaide (relating to the cooperative Australian-British rocket and atomic test programme), security considerations were paramount and that facilities should 'be granted only on the condition that the master of *Lena* agreed to waive the immunities that normally applied to a public ship'.²⁷⁵ The prevailing anti-communist mindset maintained that the Soviets were untrustworthy and had to be kept under surveillance in order to prevent them from coming into contact with any sensitive information relating to western strategic and defence capabilities.

Meanwhile, the question concerning the ships' legal status and how they should be treated was still unresolved. It was decided that a conference of representatives from the Departments of External Affairs, Customs and Excise, Immigration, Health, and the Prime Minister's and Attorney General's offices be held at the Department of External Affairs on 23 March 1956 to prepare a submission to

²⁷⁴ Kevin, J. C. G. 1956. For the Minister. Antarctic: International Geophysical year: Russian ship *Lena*, 23 March 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 3.

²⁷⁵ The Prime Minister 1956. MCT/CM. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4.

the Cabinet concerning how to treat the Soviet vessels. In his report of the conference to the Minister of External Affairs R. Casey, Kevin wrote that the conference felt that '*Lena* should be treated as a private vessel but without declaring to the ship's master' that that status was attributed to her. To avoid any charges of discrimination a crew muster should not be required, but the ship's master should be asked to produce a list of his crew and passengers; and that if any of the crew or passengers were to go ashore, 'they must carry papers of identity'. In making these suggestions, the conference was influenced by the fact that the Cabinet, when it settled its reply to the Russian Note of November 1955, had agreed that 'the expedition ship and its personnel would be subject in Australia to local jurisdiction and regulations.'²⁷⁶ The Cabinet, in its Decision No. 114 of 23 March, noted that *Lena* was to arrive in Adelaide on 25 March and that the question arose as to whether she was to be treated as a public or as a private vessel. The Cabinet decided that *Lena* should be treated as any other passenger ship would be treated and that its personnel would be subject to local jurisdiction and regulations. This would allow adequate control of the Soviet visitors and would perhaps provide the opportunity for closer surveillance. The question of whether *Lena* was formally a public or private vessel should not be pursued. Further advice was however, sought by the Department of External Affairs from the United Kingdom government concerning how it defined public vessels and what facilities and immunities it accorded their crews, as well as its treatment of aircraft, as these questions were likely to arise before and during the IGY.²⁷⁷

It appears that the whole point surrounding whether the vessel was public or private, which had aroused such official concern, was the fact that it belonged to a potential enemy. There was no question about any potential threat from vessels belonging to Australian allies. However much Australia would have liked to keep the USSR out of Antarctica and the Australian mainland, Australian involvement in the IGY programme made it impossible to refuse to deal with the Soviets and their scientific expedition. Although the programme itself was scientific and avowedly non-political, the intrusion of cold war tensions made the participants suspect each other of using science to gain maximum political and strategic advantage by

²⁷⁶ Kevin, J C. G. 1956. For the Minister. Antarctic: International Geophysical year: Russian ship *Lena*, 23 March 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 3.

²⁷⁷ Department of External Affairs 1956. Cablegram. To Australian High Commission, London. Confidential, 26 March 1956, Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/4/9 part 3.

expanding their sphere of influence and consolidating their presence in the region. Political considerations could not be totally excluded from purported scientific interactions and would often threaten to surface and put in jeopardy the non-political cooperative spirit of the IGY.

4.3 *Lena* arrives

Lena arrived at Port Adelaide on 28 March 1956 to load a full cargo of Australian barley for German buyers. The ship's complement consisted of 65 members of the crew and 81 passengers, all of Soviet nationality. Included in the passengers were a few scientists but the greater number were artisans who had been employed in the erection of a scientific base in the Antarctic. Each person on board was in possession of a valid Soviet seamen's passport. These, after examination by the boarding officer, 'were returned to the grantees so that the request made to the master that each person going ashore should be in possession of his or her passport could be complied with'. Everything went smoothly and all formalities were fulfilled, reported Edson, the migration officer for South Australia.²⁷⁸

After their long Antarctic journey, the crew and passengers on *Lena* were keen to go ashore and to explore the city. Hodirev recalled that when they arrived in Adelaide, the ship's Communist Party political officer, whose duty it was to ensure that everyone on board was drilled in party policy, and was appropriately patriotic, attempted to forbid anyone on the ship from going ashore. He was apparently afraid of provocation from Russian *émigrés*, as it was usual for them to hand out anti-Soviet propaganda to visitors from the USSR and to encourage them to defect. However, the young communist party members convened a meeting at which they overrode the decision not to leave the ship, deciding that they would go ashore, as long as they did not go alone, but in groups of three. In ports, which were visited by Soviet ships, these groups of three were known as 'Russian troikas'²⁷⁹ until the practice ceased with the period of glasnost [openness] and the eventual break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991.

²⁷⁸ Edson, G. A. M. 1956. For the Secretary. Russian Antarctic vessel *Lena*. Memorandum No 55/67970 of 26/3/56, 13 April 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4.

²⁷⁹ Strugatskiy, V. 2006. Polusa Vladimira Hodireva [The Poles of Vladimir Hodirev]. *Smena*, St Petersburg, 21 February: 6.



Fig. 12. Left to right: Douglas Mawson alongside *Lena* in Adelaide, unknown, M. Glaessner (South Australian Museum).

The Australian Antarctic explorer, Sir Douglas Mawson, was one of the first to visit the ship, to which the public was allowed free access during its stay in port (Fig. 12, 13).



Fig.13. Left to right: Douglas Mawson aboard *Lena* in Adelaide. The other person is M. Glaessner (South Australian Museum)

The Australia - USSR Friendship Society (founded in 1939) assumed an active role in organising onshore tours and meetings with local scientists, workers and youth. Two press conferences were held and an official visit was paid to the mayor of the city.²⁸⁰ Besides the interest shown by the public and scientists, the Australian authorities showed interest of another nature. *Lena's* visit provided an opportunity to obtain 'information of value' to naval intelligence, so arrangements were made to exploit it. Two civilians, rather than naval intelligence officers, boarded the ship while it was open to the public, making sure that the suspicions of the Russians were not aroused, reported a secretary of the Australian Department of Navy to the Department of External Affairs on 9 May 1956.²⁸¹ What this clandestinely obtained 'information of value' could have been is hard to fathom, as the scientists were quite willing to share their knowledge and demonstrate equipment to anybody who was interested as demonstrated in New Zealand when 'the *Ob* was thrown open for public inspection... through which they [the public] were apparently permitted to wander without obstruction.'²⁸²

It would seem that the government's focus on the use of intelligence officers rather than providing encouragement to its scientific community to interact and exchange information compromised both the quality of information and the spirit of the IGY. Even though loading operations were completed, *Lena's* departure was delayed for a few days due to the ship's financial commitments with the agent, and she finally cleared Port Adelaide direct for Hamburg at 08.15 hours on 13 April 1956.²⁸³ Before departing, Captain Vetrov sent Mawson a telegram thanking him for his attention and kindness during the ship's stay in Adelaide.²⁸⁴ *Lena* returned to Leningrad on 8 June 1956.

²⁸⁰ Nudelman, A. 1959. *Sovetskie ekspeditsii v Antarktiku 1955-1959 [Soviet expeditions to Antarctica 1955-1959]*. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 18.

²⁸¹ Department of the Navy 1956. Letter from the Secretary, Department of the Navy, to Mr. Tange, Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 9 May 1956, Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4.

²⁸² Hall, F. B. 1956. From High Commissioner for Commonwealth of Australia, Wellington. To the Secretary, DEA, Canberra. Antarctica – visit of the Soviet Icebreaker *Ob*, 13 April 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 3.

²⁸³ Edson, G. A. M. 1956. For the Secretary. Russian Antarctic vessel *Lena*. Memorandum No 55/67970 of 26/3/56, 13 April 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4.

²⁸⁴ Vetrov, A. 1956. Telegram to D. Mawson, 13 April 1956. Adelaide, Australia: South Australian

4.4 *Ob* at Macquarie Island and in New Zealand

During the time that *Lena* was in Adelaide, I. Adams, leader of Macquarie Island station, received a request from *Ob* on 2 April to call in and inspect the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition's (ANARE) oldest station. A. Brown, one of the radio officers on the island, wrote that 'there was much running around in Canberra when we sent the Russian request back to ANARE headquarters in Melbourne, but to their credit, Canberra gave us permission to allow the Russians ashore.'²⁸⁵ This was the first time that a Russian ship had visited Macquarie Island since the sloops *Vostok* and *Mirny* of Bellingshausen's first Russian Antarctic expedition charted its coastline and conducted scientific investigations in November 1820, and the first foreign ship to have visited the station since it was opened in 1948. In anticipation of the visit, the Australians took the opportunity of writing letters home, as they felt sure that *Ob* would take them to send on.

The next day, on 3 April, twelve people (according to Suzyumov, who named each one), thirteen according to the recollections of the Australians, from *Ob* came ashore, including the head of the expedition Professor Kort, Captain Man and the scientific secretary of the expedition Suzyumov, who 'took lengthy notes on everything during the whole stay' (Fig. 14, 15).²⁸⁶

Museum, File 23 DM Russians.

²⁸⁵ A. Brown, personal communication, December 2007.

²⁸⁶ Adams, I. 1956. Report 1956, Macquarie Island Station Log book. Kingston, Tasmania, Australia: Australian Antarctic Division Special Collection: 84.



Fig.14. Landing on Macquarie Island under the watchful eye of Captain Man (personal collection of Bob Dingle)



Fig.15. Five members of the Russian team (names unknown) safe ashore. Second from left on front row is Kent Keith, Australian biologist (personal collection of Bob Dingle).

The visit, which was to last one day, turned into two due to deteriorating weather conditions, as it became too dangerous to return to the ship in the dark.²⁸⁷ The following day, after a difficult operation in the heavy surf, the Australians managed to get the Soviet personnel back to their vessel. Adams and two Australians accompanied their visitors to *Ob*, where they ‘were given a rousing welcome as [they] walked up the gangway in front of whirring movie cameras.’²⁸⁸ They were shown the facilities and presented with all manner of gifts including clothing, wine, vodka, books and Soviet postage stamps: overall, ‘a very friendly atmosphere was

²⁸⁷ Suzyumov, E. 1958. Kontakty s uchenymi i predstavitelyami obshestvennosti drugih stran [Contacts with foreign scientists and community representatives]. In Bardin, I. (Ed). *Opisanie ekspeditsii na d/e Ob 1955-1956* [Account of the expedition on the diesel/electric ship *Ob* 1955-1956]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 216.

²⁸⁸ A. Brown, personal communication, December 2007.

apparent.²⁸⁹ When *Ob* finally departed, the unanimous opinion of the Australians was that 'there's nothing wrong with the Russian people – the fault must be their system!'²⁹⁰ Soon after they left, Kort and Man sent a radio message thanking the Australians for their hospitality:

DEAR MR ADAMS LEAVING SHORE OF MACQUARIE ISLAND WE WISH GOOD LUCK YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES AND THANK YOU FOR A CORDIAL HOSPITALITY STOP YOU HAVE GIVEN US VERY GREAT IMPRESSION VISITING OF ISLAND MAKING ACQUAINTANCE WITH YOU AND YOUR BRAVE BEHAVIOUR DURING LANDING AND DEPARTURE STOP WISH YOU AND ALL OF YOUR COLLEAGUES GOOD HEALTH ON THE GREAT SUCCESS IN YOUR SCIENTIFIC WORK.²⁹¹

The visit had succeeded in establishing an atmosphere of good will and a genuine desire from all sides to continue friendly relations.

After leaving Macquarie Island, *Ob* continued its work of mapping the New Zealand oceanic ridge. Man wrote that because the ship was so close to New Zealand, which was a participant in the IGY programme, it was considered 'a duty' to call in to Wellington on a courtesy visit and at the same time to take on fuel, water and fresh produce.²⁹² The visit to New Zealand's capital city was not planned and was totally unexpected by the New Zealand government, whose cold war politics and attitude to the Soviet presence in Antarctica were very similar to those held by the US and Australia, although New Zealand, as opposed to Australia, had not had a rupture in diplomatic relations with the USSR.

The Australian High Commission in Wellington reported to the Australian Department of External Affairs in Canberra that the New Zealand authorities were unenthusiastic about the visit and did not intend to make any particular arrangements, as they considered that the Soviet legation in New Zealand would use the visit for

²⁸⁹ Adams, I. 1956. Report 1956, Macquarie Island Station Log book. Kingston, Tasmania, Australia: Australian Antarctic Division Special Collection: 84.

²⁹⁰ A. Brown, personal communication, December 2007.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Man, I. 2006. *Ostrova v Yuzhnom okeane* [Islands in the Southern Ocean]. *Priroda*, Moscow, 2: 77-78.

propaganda purposes.²⁹³ On 6 April, an *Aide Memoire* was handed to the Soviet *Chargé d'Affaires*, K. Efremov, laying down the procedure to be followed on arrival of *Ob* in Wellington. As a ship employed on a scientific expedition, it would be treated as a public vessel and 'exempted from the normal pilotage dues as well as harbour, port and wharfage dues', but not normal customs and health formalities. On arrival, customs, health and police officials would, in accordance with normal procedure, visit the vessel. 'Two members of the Soviet Legation [were to] accompany the boarding party. The Captain and the ship's doctor would be interviewed, and six copies of a list giving the names of all personnel on the ship would be required. The ship's register was to be inspected.'²⁹⁴ The Soviet legation was asked to provide information concerning the probable duration of the ship's stay, any repair facilities required, and whether shore leave would be granted to members of the ship's company. In the event of shore leave being granted, it would be necessary to inform the police authorities at the Central Police Station in Wellington of the number of personnel proceeding ashore and the time for which leave had been granted. Water, provisions and other supplies were to be procured by the vessel through normal commercial channels.²⁹⁵ Much to the chagrin of the New Zealand authorities, no reply was received from the legation and no answers to the questions were forthcoming.²⁹⁶

In the event, the ship was boarded by the customs, health and police officials, members of the Soviet legation and representatives of the press. 'The officials confined themselves to formalities and accepted the assurances of the captain that the regulations would be complied with. Copies of a list detailing the persons on board were provided as requested. In all, there were 119 persons on the ship, including 58 scientists.'²⁹⁷ After berthing on the afternoon of 9 April, Man, who spoke some

²⁹³ Hall, F. B. 1956. Cablegram. From Australian High Commission, Wellington. Antarctica. Visit of Soviet Icebreaker, 6 April 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/4/9/ part 3.

²⁹⁴ Ministry of External Affairs, NZ. 1956. *Aide Mémoire*, 6 April 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4.

²⁹⁵ Ibid.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ministry of External Affairs, NZ. 1956. *Aide Mémoire*, 6 April 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4.

English, met representatives of the press and explained through an interpreter that while the ship was taking on fresh water and supplies, 'the main reason for the visit was to bring good wishes to New Zealand. He spoke of the establishment of the Soviet Antarctic base *Mirny*, emphasising that this was part of the USSR's contribution to the IGY. He explained that *Ob* would proceed to Adelaide and then pass through Antarctic waters again on scientific work before its return to the Soviet Union.'²⁹⁸

The Australian High Commission in Wellington further reported that, on 10 April, in spite of earlier attempts by the New Zealand Department of External Affairs at discouragement (probably because they were afraid of Soviet propaganda and influence) Man, Kort, Suzyumov, and the Soviet *Chargé d' Affaires*, Efremov paid official calls first on the Deputy Prime Minister, Keith J. Holyoake, who had visited the Soviet Union the previous year, and then on the Prime Minister, Sidney G. Holland, the leaders of the National Party government. The Minister in charge of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Ronald M. Algie and the Minister for External Affairs, Tom L. Macdonald were with the Prime Minister. A call was also paid on the Mayor of Wellington, R. M. McAllister, who, according to Suzyumov was most helpful, offering the Soviet scientists and sailors freedom of the city and providing them with full cooperation and hospitality.²⁹⁹

Later the same day, the Prime Minister, accompanied by Algie, visited *Ob* for an hour. They were shown scientific work in progress and were given refreshments. Invitations to visit the ship were issued to scientists and other selected individuals, and on the afternoon of 10 April, *Ob* was opened to the public for a four hour period, during which time 1426 visitors came aboard. Visiting times were extended due to the large number of people wanting to inspect the ship, and, in total, over 3,000 people were able to see the onboard facilities.³⁰⁰ They were permitted 'to wander

²⁹⁸ Hall, F.B. 1956. From High Commissioner for Commonwealth of Australia, Wellington. To the Secretary, DEA, Canberra. Antarctica – visit of the Soviet Icebreaker *Ob*, 13 April 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 3.

²⁹⁹ Suzyumov, E. 1958. Kontakty s uchenymi i predstaviteliymi obshestvennosti drugih stran [Contacts with foreign scientists and community representatives]. In Bardin, I. (Ed). *Opisanie ekspeditsii na d/e Ob 1955-1956* [Account of the expedition on the diesel/electric ship *Ob* 1955-1956]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 217.

³⁰⁰ Ibid: 221, 222.

about without obstruction'; scientists were in their laboratories in order to explain the instruments to the public, and a large number of charts and navigational aids were on view.³⁰¹

A formal reception in honour of Man and Kort was given by the Soviet legation on 11 April at which 200 people including members of the New Zealand government and the New Zealand parliament, scientists and public were present.³⁰² There were a number of contacts between the Soviet scientists and New Zealand scientists. Kort offered to give a lecture about the results of Soviet exploration in the Antarctic, and this was arranged under the auspices of the Royal Society of New Zealand (Wellington branch). Speaking through an interpreter, Kort began by saying that he believed that the 'meeting will help in the cause of the common knowledge of science and the common interest of both countries'. He outlined some of the oceanographic research carried out on *Ob* during its 5,200 mile voyage from when it left Mirny on 29 February until it docked in Wellington.³⁰³

'Throughout *Ob*'s visit, every effort was made by the Soviet legation and the ship's officers and company to cultivate the goodwill of the public and of the Government. Political subjects were eschewed by all concerned in order to ensure that the spirit of good will prevailed. The ship's officers were cooperative and carried out all instructions from local officials. No disorderliness or other difficulties with members of the ship's company ashore were reported.'³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ Hall, F. B. 1956. From High Commissioner for Commonwealth of Australia, Wellington. To the Secretary, DEA, Canberra. Antarctica – visit of the Soviet Icebreaker *Ob*, 13 April 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 3.

³⁰² Suzyumov, E. 1958. Kontakty s uchenymi i predstavitelyami obshestvennosti drugih stran [Contacts with foreign scientists and community representatives]. In Bardin I. (Ed). *Opisanie ekspeditsii na d/e Ob 1955-1956* [Account of the expedition on the diesel/electric ship *Ob* 1955-1956]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 217.

³⁰³ Kort, V. 1956. Lecture to the Royal Society of NZ (Wellington Branch) by professor Kort of the Russian ship *Ob*, April. Kingston, Tasmania, Australia: Australian Antarctic Division Special Collection.

³⁰⁴ Department of External Affairs, NZ 1956. From Secretary of External Affairs to the Counsellor, New Zealand Embassy, Washington. Visit of Soviet icebreaker *Ob*, 24 April 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4.



Fig. 16. Evgeniy Suzyumov (personal collection of Aleksei Suzyumov)

Suzyumov (Fig. 16) mentions with a sense of pride that he was told that the cooperative behaviour of the Soviet expedition was in marked contrast to the behaviour of the American Antarctic expedition which had visited Wellington earlier: the American navy men had not been quite so orderly and their antics had delayed their vessel's departure by 24 hours.³⁰⁵ It appears that the Soviet visit developed rather further than had been expected or hoped by the New Zealand authorities, or at least by the Department of External Affairs, where the Soviet Legation's insistence that *Ob* had come on a courtesy visit had initially been resisted. The friendliness and openness of the Soviet crew and scientists, together with the natural curiosity of the New Zealand public, made it difficult to confine the visit to a mere taking on of supplies. There was little in the words or behaviour of the visitors to which exception could be taken. They stressed throughout the importance of international cooperation in attaining the scientific objectives of the IGY.³⁰⁶ The visit had taken on a high profile, notwithstanding the attempts of the Department of External Affairs of NZ to keep it low key. If building cordial relations was the Soviet aim, it certainly demonstrated the success of a 'showboat' rather than a 'gunboat' style of diplomacy.

³⁰⁵ Suzyumov, E. 1958. *K shestomu materiku [To the sixth continent]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 268.

³⁰⁶ Hall, F. B. 1956. From High Commissioner for Commonwealth of Australia, Wellington. To the Secretary, DEA, Canberra. Antarctica – visit of the Soviet Icebreaker *Ob*, 13 April 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 3.

The Department, however, was sure that the Soviet legation was intent upon deriving maximum political capital from the occasion and was especially piqued by the fact that the legation showed no disposition to comply with formal requests made by the department and had achieved all that it wanted. This was indeed the case. The visit developed friendly relations with government ministers, scientists and the general public and had presented impressive scientific capabilities in preparing for the IGY programme, thereby raising the international prestige of the USSR. The visit was indeed one of courtesy and certainly not intended to cause offence: it was somewhat unfortunate that the department felt it necessary to register a formal protest at the failure of the legation to provide answers to the questions asked about *Ob*'s visit.³⁰⁷

4.5 *Ob* in Australia

Ob left New Zealand on 12 April to continue her oceanographic studies in the Tasman Sea *en route* to Adelaide where she arrived³⁰⁸ on 21 April to take on a load of barley for delivery to Germany. As soon as the vessel had docked, Professor M. Glaessner³⁰⁹ came on board with an invitation from Sir Douglas Mawson for twelve members of staff to have lunch at the Mawson residence the next day, 22 April.³¹⁰ The Soviets were impressed by the cordial reception and stimulating exchange of

³⁰⁷ Department of External Affairs, NZ 1956. From Secretary of External Affairs to the Counsellor, New Zealand Embassy, Washington. Visit of Soviet icebreaker *Ob*, 24 April 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4.

³⁰⁸ Suzyumov, E. 1958. Kontakty s uchenymi i predstavitelyami obshestvennosti drugih stran [Contacts with foreign scientists and community representatives]. In Bardin, I. (Ed). *Opisanie ekspeditsii na d/e Ob 1955-1956* [Account of the expedition on the diesel/electric ship *Ob* 1955-1956]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 222.

³⁰⁹ Glaessner had been a member of the faculty at Moscow University after leaving Vienna around 1936 and later emigrated to Australia to join the University of Adelaide. - P. Webb, personal communication, 19 and 26 July 2007.

³¹⁰ Mawson was held in extremely high regard by the Soviets, so much so that Suzyumov would publish the first biography of the Australian explorer in 1960 [Suzyumov, E. 1960. *Zhizn otdannaia Antarktide. Issledovatel Antarktiki D. Mawson* [A life given to the Antarctic. Antarctic explorer D. Mawson]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press), 80 p]. He wrote of Mawson that, as a contemporary of Scott, Shackleton, Amundsen and Nansen, he and his expedition distinguished themselves by their purposeful investigations and scientific output. Suzyumov's biography of Mawson was later translated into English and published by the Libraries Board of South Australia in 1968 [Suzyumov, E. 1960. *A life given to the Antarctic*. Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia, 60 p.]

views on Antarctic research accorded to them by the Mawsons. The day after entertaining the Soviet visitors, Mawson, his wife Paquita, and Glaessner toured *Ob*, where they spent almost the whole day. They were interested in meeting the expedition staff and inspecting facilities, paying special attention to the geological and hydro-chemical laboratories. After the tour, a reception was held in honour of the esteemed visitor. Mawson congratulated the Soviet scientists on the extent of their research and wished them every success in their scientific endeavours. The following day, 24 April, Mawson again visited the ship, accompanied by Phillip G. Law, the Director of the Australian Antarctic Division of the Department of External Affairs, who had flown in from Melbourne. They brought with them some 50 volumes of Australian Antarctic research literature, which they presented to the ship. Man asked Mawson to 'express himself' in the visitors' book, in which Mawson wrote:

To captain Man, Professor Kort and all Scientific Staff, Officers and crew of the exploring vessel *Ob*. Your splendid organization, excellent equipment and able personnel operating all departments of activity have greatly impressed me. I am convinced that the results of your Russian Antarctic expedition cooperating in the scientific programme of the IGY will very greatly advance knowledge, in all departments of science, concerning the Far Southern regions. [I sincerely believe that our friendly relations will bring mutual benefit for the scientific work undertaken by Australia and Russia] May this friendly association in scientific endeavour lead the way to wider international cooperation and understanding. Best wishes and good luck in the prosecution of your work.

The sentence in brackets is omitted in Mawson's letter to Casey in which he quoted his inscription,³¹¹ though it appears in Suzyumov's version of the text.³¹² On the evening of 24 April, a large group of scientists from the ship attended a lecture by Law, which was delivered in the Mawson building of the University of Adelaide. Mawson himself said a few introductory words in which he welcomed the Soviet guests and looked forward to further strengthening relations between the Soviet and Australian researchers. Law continued with his lecture about the Australian 1956 expedition on *Kista Dan*, accompanied by a colour slide show. He was followed by Kort, who spoke briefly about the goals of Soviet Antarctic research in preparing for

³¹¹ Mawson, D. 1956. A letter to Casey, 25 April 1956, Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/4/9 part 4.

³¹² Suzyumov, E. 1958. *K shestomu materiku [To the sixth continent]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 289–290.

the IGY and undertaking oceanographic research in the Southern Ocean.³¹³ Friendly relations developed with many academics from the University of Adelaide and visits arranged to the mining, biology and other faculties, as well as the Bureau of Meteorology. The Australia - USSR Friendship Society organised sightseeing and study excursions around Adelaide and its environs, as well as a meeting of the eight Soviet women on board (M. Klyonova, N. Tsouprinova, F. Borodina, V. Dolganova, E. Mitineva, A. Ilyina, L. Boltayevskaya and V. Bushmanova) with a group of Australian women. Suzyumov believed that Mawson played a key role in forging these fruitful relations and in creating an atmosphere of friendship and understanding, which he realised, was not an easy task, as there were no diplomatic relations between Australia and USSR.³¹⁴ These sentiments were later echoed by Somov, the overall leader of the Soviet expedition, who in a telegram expressed his 'gratitude to the Australian people, Douglas Mawson and Philip Law for their care to our expedition ships *Lena* and *Ob* at their stay in Adelaide.'³¹⁵

On 25 April, Mawson reported on his visit to the Soviet ship to Minister of External Affairs Casey, and expressed the view that it was an outstanding opportunity for Australians interested in oceanography to examine the latest specialised equipment, as much of the work that was routine on board *Ob* had never been attempted by Australians in their seas. He seemed to chide the government for not showing a more active interest in the ship's visit, saying that since the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) was proceeding to develop the science of oceanography, an opportunity to view the latest technology and learn of the research that had been conducted had been lost. All the more so, since the expedition staff had without hesitation given all information sought concerning the detail of their plans, equipment and discoveries and readily acknowledged prior work done by Australian expeditions. Mawson attempted to allay any fears about Soviet intentions, saying that he did not expect that Russia would lay claim to the Australian Antarctic Territory. However, he considered that it

³¹³ Suzyumov, E. 1958. Kontakty s uchenimyi i predstavitel'yami obshchestvennosti drugih stran [Contacts with foreign scientists and community representatives]. In Bardin, I. (Ed.) *Opisanie ekspeditsii na d/e Ob 1955-1956* [Account of the expedition on the diesel/electric ship *Ob* 1955-1956]. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 223.

³¹⁴ Ibid: 213-232.

³¹⁵ Donovan 1956. Teletype message. To Law from Donovan, ANARE, Melbourne, 14 May 1956, Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4.

must be greatly encouraged to do so by the USA failure to recognise Australia's claims and that if Russia did stay in Queen Mary Land at the conclusion of the IGY, the blame must be squarely borne by the USA. Acknowledging the government's concerns, he wrote: 'I see nothing directly political in their visit, only a desire for friendly relations and a desire for scientists, of what is destined to be a really famous expedition, to meet Australian scientists in like subjects.'³¹⁶

Casey concurred with Mawson's conclusion that the scientific personnel on *Ob* were concerned solely with scientific matters, as he wrote to the Defence Minister, Sir Philip McBride on 27 April, but was nonetheless wary of the fact that 'the results of the oceanographic research could be of direct, practical value to the Russian Navy, particularly on the submarine side. The Russian scientists would not need to know anything about the end use of their researches by the Soviet Naval establishment.'³¹⁷ Casey considered that the possibility that the Soviets would build a military base on the AAT was very real, and had asked Law to look for signs of military activity at *Mirny* when the Australians had visited the Soviet station on 30 January 1956. Law had written a full report of his visit and helped allay Casey's fears by noting that the expedition appeared to be civilian and non-military.³¹⁸

While in Adelaide, *Ob* received an invitation to visit Melbourne from the chairman of the Australia - USSR friendship society, John Rodgers.³¹⁹ Both Kort and Man expressed their desire to go and offered to take Mawson on the voyage for him to observe their equipment and staff in operation. Rodgers sent Casey an urgent telegram asking the government to approve the visit. Casey, however, was not prepared to make such approval: in his reply, he reiterated the Australian Government's position that, while it had agreed that transit and servicing would be available in Australia for the ships and aircraft of any country participating in the IGY, the occasion of such visits did not appear to call for any special arrangements.

³¹⁶ Mawson, D. 1956. A letter to Casey, 25 April 1956, Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/4/9 part 4.

³¹⁷ Casey, R. 1956. Letter to Minister for Defence, Melbourne, 27 April 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/4/9 part 4.

³¹⁸ Law, P. 1956. Report on visit to USSR base at *Mirny*. Kingston, Tasmania, Australia: Australian Antarctic Division Library Special Collection.

³¹⁹ Russian visit 'not desired'. 1956. *The Age*, Melbourne, 25 April.

This was his diplomatic way of saying that approval for the requested 'special arrangements' was out of the question because only facilities that were strictly necessary were to be provided. The Soviets believed that Mawson was doing everything possible to make the visit a reality, but was being thwarted by Law, who was against the visit to Melbourne, which was the location of the headquarters of the Antarctic division. They were of the opinion that Law was not interested in raising the international prestige of the Soviets by having them display their superior level of technology and quality of research to the Australian scientists.³²⁰

A further telegram to Casey, this time asking for his assistance in having *Ob* call into Sydney, was sent by the acting federal secretary of the Building Workers' Industrial Union, but Casey's reply was identical to the one given to Rodgers. Casey was certainly being consistent and steadfast in his policy of rejecting the possibility of any special arrangements for the Soviet expedition. His reluctant attitude was virtually identical to the attitude displayed by the Department of External Affairs in New Zealand, but his job was made easier by the lack of diplomatic relations between Australia and the USSR. In New Zealand, the opportunities for more robust contacts with politicians and scientists were made easier by the presence of a Soviet legation, whereas in Australia the expedition did not have the support and connections of an embassy to assist them with their interactions with the Australian government. The expedition was more reliant on the good will of individual scientists such as Mawson, who had limited political influence, as well as organisations such as the Australia - USSR friendship society and trade unions. These had little sway with the government which suspected them of being communist sympathisers. The Australian Antarctic Division was a part of the Department of External Affairs, and as such was instrumental in transmitting government policy and unable to play a welcoming role to its Soviet scientific colleagues. Consequently, the Australian government was more successful than New Zealand in 'containing' the Soviet visit within strict boundaries, thus limiting any impact that it may have made on the broader public.

³²⁰ AANII 1956. *Pervaya morskaya Antarkticheskaya Expeditsia. Otchet o rabote morskoi chasti za 1955-1956* [The first marine Antarctic expedition. Research report of the marine component of the composite Antarctic expedition 1955-1956]. St Petersburg: Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute.

Some members of the public, however, did not understand the government's reluctance to widen the scope of the visit. Casey received a telegram from a Clive and Joan Jackson: 'ban ship *Ob* ridiculous are you frightened few Soviet explorers.'³²¹ There also did not appear to be a shortage of members of the general public interested in visiting the ship, which was berthed in Port Adelaide, 10 km out of the city. A large number of people came aboard on the ANZAC day holiday on 25 April, with approximately 5,000 visiting on Sunday 29 April, the day before its scheduled departure. In total, over 10,000 people were able to look over the ship during its stay in Adelaide.³²² On 30 April, the day of *Ob*'s departure for Hamburg a reception was held in honour of the Soviet personnel, with fifty scientists from the University of Adelaide attending. The president of the scientific club, Professor F. Bull expressed an overall feeling of satisfaction about the visit and the broad scientific contacts that had been established between Australian scientists and their Soviet colleagues.³²³ Prior to departure, the master publicly expressed on behalf of the ship's personnel and himself, his pleasure at a most enjoyable stay in Port Adelaide.

Ob returned to Leningrad on 8 July 1956 after calling in to Kerguelen on 20 May and unloading in Hamburg from 27 June to 4 July (Fig.17).³²⁴

³²¹ Jackson 1956. Telegram to Casey, 26 April 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/4/9 part 4.

³²² Suzyumov, E. 1958. Kontakty s uchenymi i predstavitel'yami obshchestvennosti drugih stran [Contacts with foreign scientists and community representatives]. In Bardin, I. (Ed). *Opisanie ekspeditsii na d/e Ob 1955-1956* [Account of the expedition on the diesel/electric ship *Ob* 1955-1956]. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press): 228.

³²³ Ibid, 225.

³²⁴ Ibid, 229.



Fig.17. Return of the *Ob* to Leningrad. Photo by N. Naumenkov (Archives of Film and Photo Documents, Krasnogorsk, Russia).

During the whole voyage, *Ob* had covered 33,000 miles, 4,000 of those in ice conditions and 1,040 in shallow waters with no navigational charts and research work was conducted over 20,000 miles. Observations were made at 156 deep-water oceanographic stations, fifty-seven of which were in Antarctic coastal waters.³²⁵ The first composite Soviet Antarctic expedition was an ambitious project requiring considerable government funding and the Soviet government considered itself fortunate that it was able to charter *Ob* and *Lena* to deliver grain from Adelaide to Hamburg for a total sum of £100,000 (which exceeded one million gold roubles when converted into Soviet currency) on the return journey from Antarctica. The charter enabled it to recoup over 70% of the Antarctic expedition's foreign currency expenses.³²⁶

The expedition had fulfilled its primary task of building a base station on the Antarctic continent and conducting multifaceted research in the South Polar region. The USSR Academy of Sciences published the scientific reports of the marine component of the expedition in *An account of the expedition on the diesel/electric*

³²⁵ Somov, M. 1957. The Preliminary results of work in 1955-1957. Kingston: Australian Antarctic Division Library Special Collection: 12.

³²⁶ Bakaev, V. 1956. Pervomu zamestitelu predsedatelia Soveta Ministrov SSSR Kaganovichu [Bakaev, V. To the first vice-chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR Kaganovitch, 24 April]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2584.

ship Ob 1955–1956 in 1958³²⁷ and the *General description of the first continental expedition 1955–1957* in 1959,³²⁸ as well as many articles in scientific journals. However, in a meeting with the chief of Glavsevmorput, Burhanov, the scientists reported that in addition to the scientific achievements, a particularly important aspect of the expedition was the development of co-operation with scientists of other countries, especially the meetings with Australian expedition staff on *Kista Dan* and with scientists in Wellington and Adelaide.³²⁹

4.6 Conclusion

The available documents illustrate the concerns that the Australian and New Zealand governments held about the intentions of the Soviet Antarctic programme and their lack of enthusiasm for *Ob* and *Lena* entering their ports. The governments considered ways of limiting any political impact that the visits may have made and ultimately refused to provide anything more than the facilities that they reluctantly offered to the expeditionary vessels. A variety of factors, including the fear of a Soviet Antarctic claim and defence implications, were considered in formulating this policy. However the fear of international opprobrium made it impossible for the two governments to follow their preferred option of totally denying access to their ports. While reluctantly allowing the vessels access, the governments sought ways of controlling them and their passengers during their stay in order to prevent the visit from acquiring a high profile and thus raising the prestige of a country considered to be an enemy. It also gave the authorities the opportunity of greater surveillance in case the visitors attempted to gather intelligence covertly, especially at the sensitive atomic and rocket research laboratories located in Adelaide, as well as sending their own intelligence agents on board in order to collect any potentially 'valuable information'. While nominally adhering to the non-political scientific intention of the

³²⁷ Bardin, I. (Ed.) 1958. *Opisanie ekspeditsii na dizel-elektrohode Ob 1955–1956* [An account of the expedition on the diesel/electric ship 'Ob' 1955–1956]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk (Academy of Sciences Press), 238 p.

³²⁸ Somov, M. 1959. *Pervaya Kontinentalnaya Ekspeditsia 1955–1957. Obschee opisanie* [The First Continental Expedition 1955 - 1957. A general account]. Leningrad: Morskoi Transport (Marine Transport Press), 212p.

³²⁹ Glavsevmorput 1956. Stenogramma soveschaniya u nachalnika GSMP Burhanova, 10 Aprelya 1956. Informatsiya pribivshih iz Antarktiki tov. Avsyuk, Shumskiy i Markov [Transcript of the meeting with Burhanov, Head of the Main Directorate of the Northern Sea Route. Information provided by Avsyuk, Shumskiy and Markov, 10 April 1956]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2583.

IGY, the authorities' political and security considerations were the actual factors operating when dealing with the Soviet visitors.

In contrast, a more fruitful and less politically fraught approach was epitomised by Mawson, who visited the ships several times during their stay, developed amiable relations and encouraged his colleagues at the University of Adelaide to do likewise. In a letter to Casey, he suggested that scientists from CSIRO be encouraged to inspect the ships, since the Soviet scientists were quite happy to share their research results and allow access to their equipment. Permitting greater freedom of movement between different ports, which the government discouraged, would have allowed a larger number of Australian scientists to inspect the Soviet facilities and collect more valuable information than that acquired by civilian intelligence officers, a method which the authorities seemed to favour.

Although the government's reluctance limited the number of Australian scientists who were able to visit the ships, Mawson acted as a catalyst in creating an environment in the Adelaide scientific community that was more conducive to scientific interaction with the Soviets. The main interest of the scientists from both sides was the acquisition and exchange of knowledge, which became the common ground for forging lasting relationships and even friendships. An Australian expedition member expressed the commonly held perception that the Australians 'found the Russians a friendly, sincere and polite lot who were always eager to share their aspirations with us, including their scientific results. I was very impressed, and so was everyone else in our expedition. We also established firm friendships with some individuals.'³³⁰ Mawson was hopeful that this association in scientific endeavour would have wider repercussions and lead to international co-operation and understanding. His opinion that 'if only the scientists of Russia were in political power, all would be well'³³¹ could at that time have equally applied to the scientists of Australia.

³³⁰ A. Brown, personal communication, December 2007.

³³¹ Mawson, D. 1957. Letter to Jessie Street, 6 September 1957. Adelaide, Australia: South Australian Museum, File 23 DM Russians.

Notwithstanding governmental suspicion and reluctance, it would seem that, on this occasion at least, the Soviet visitors had no sinister ulterior motives. The premier of the USSR, Nikita Khrushchev, in March 1956 said that after Stalin's death in March 1953, the Soviets had 'convincingly proved our peace-making nature, and we will continue to prove it.'³³² The behaviour of the Soviet personnel was in accordance with Khrushchev's declaration: their professed intention was to build 'good will', and judging by the level of scientific and human interaction, their courtesy visits to Macquarie Island and New Zealand and their stop in Australia did in fact lead to a greater understanding and cooperation with the scientists of Australia and New Zealand, which continued during and after the IGY.

³³² Zubok, V. and C. Pleshakov 1996. *Inside the Kremlin's cold war*. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press : 185

TOWARDS THE GREAT UNKNOWN: THE SOVIETS PREPARE FOR THEIR THRUST INTO THE ANTARCTIC INTERIOR³³³

National prestige and the desire to reap a rich scientific harvest were the forces driving both the Soviet and American expeditions in their quest to establish stations deep in the Antarctic interior in preparation for research to be carried out during the IGY. While American historians and expedition members have left a record of the American IGY exploits, little is known in the English speaking world of the men of the first Soviet Antarctic expedition who landed on the coast of the Antarctic continent in January 1956. They quickly built their main base, *Mirny*, and as a result gained a firm foothold from which to launch out into the icy interior towards the South Geomagnetic Pole and the Pole of Inaccessibility. This chapter uses Russian sources to trace the preparatory steps taken by these pioneers in their attempt to reach and establish scientific bases in those remote locations.

In the history of Antarctic exploration, the quest to reach the South Pole was a singularly potent force impelling individual explorers to undergo extreme privations, endure hardship and risk death for the honour of being the first to attain that almost mythical goal. 'There was danger in it – and glory if the South Pole were reached. There was also a lot of scientific work to be accomplished... But even the most scholarly scientist could not resist the romance of the dream of reaching the South Pole, the uttermost part of the earth.'³³⁴ For some, like Robert F. Scott, it was the desire to 'secure for the British nation the honour of that achievement' as well as to 'bring back a rich harvest of scientific results.'³³⁵ For others, like Roald

³³³ This chapter is based on a paper which was prepared for the third SCAR workshop on the history of Antarctic research entitled 'National and transnational agendas in Antarctic Research from the 1950s and beyond', Byrd Polar Research Center, Columbus, Ohio, USA, 25-26 October 2007 and is now in Press Byrd Polar Research Center.

³³⁴ Bixby, W. 1961. *The race to the South Pole*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company : 7.

³³⁵ Mountevans, E. 1958. *South with Scott*. London: Collins: 1.

Amundsen, it was the aspiration to uphold his own prestige as a polar explorer³³⁶ and scientific investigator. The endeavour in the name of science and personal or national prestige is the leitmotif running through the history of Antarctic exploration (if one puts aside the specific commercial incentives of the sealers and whalers), starting from Cook's second voyage through to the IGY when sixty-seven nations of the world joined in a collaborative effort to study the globe with a special emphasis on Outer Space and the Antarctic. This leitmotif is certainly discernible in the apparently staid scientific efforts of the IGY. In fact, it was a critical factor driving the programs of the two most powerful participants: the USA and the USSR, with their Cold War rivalries and competing political ideologies.

While discussing the American IGY Antarctic program, the veteran American Polar explorer and Officer in charge of the US Antarctic Program Admiral Richard E. Byrd, who burned with 'a fierce national pride', stressed his belief that '[t]o put down a base at the Pole and keep men living there will tax all our ingenuity and will in itself be a great national achievement.'³³⁷ His interest in the Antarctic went far beyond the scientific interests of the IGY: Byrd was intensely keen for the Americans to establish a research base on the Geographic South Pole because he wanted it said that 'the US had done the impossible.'³³⁸ Notwithstanding Byrd's desideratum, the scientists planning the American IGY program understood the immense difficulties involved in such a project and were not about to make a firm commitment to build a base on the South Pole without the full support of their government, which at that point demonstrated no particular interest in the idea.³³⁹ However, a speech delivered by the Soviet delegate, Vladimir Belousov, at the First Antarctic conference of the Comité Spécial de l'Année Géophysique Internationale (CSAGI), the international planning body for the IGY held in Paris on 6 - 10 July 1955,³⁴⁰ was a defining moment for both the American and the Soviet Antarctic

³³⁶ Amundsen, R. 1959. *Moya zhizn [My Life]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 50.

³³⁷ Siple, P. 1959. *90 South: The story of the American South Pole Conquest*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons: 16.

³³⁸ Ibid.

³³⁹ Ibid, 98.

³⁴⁰ Gan, I. 2009. 'Will the Russians abandon Mirny to the penguins or... will they stay?' *Polar Record* 45 (233): 167-145.

program. The American scientist Paul Siple recalls that Belousov 'dropped a bombshell' when he stated that the Soviets were planning to erect a station at the Geographic South Pole. '[A]ll eyes turned to the Americans for argument', but no argument ensued since 'the American delegation realized that the attitude of the American Government had not changed essentially' from its previous noncommittal stance.³⁴¹

It was left to the conference chairman, Georges Laclavère to relieve the tension by telling the Soviets that the conference had 'accepted the offer of the US to erect and man a South Pole station', although Siple points out that 'we had not gone anywhere near that far, but now we were committed.'³⁴² Siple seems unaware that, according to New York *Times* journalist Walter Sullivan, the White House 'on the preceding March 28... had announced that there would be three American bases, including one at or near the South Pole'.³⁴³ Sullivan also differs from Siple in that he considers that everyone at the meeting 'knew that this was where the US planned to go and suspected that Belousov knew it too. It looked as though Soviet - American rivalry... was now inevitable.'³⁴⁴ In order to deflect and guide this rivalry to the benefit of the international scientific program, Laclavère astutely recommended that the USSR consider an alternative site towards the centre of the continent (at the Pole of Inaccessibility) where no station has yet been proposed, and an intermediate station in the vicinity of the South Geomagnetic Pole. The question as to whether the Americans had already decided on a base at the Geographic South Pole, or whether the Soviets knew about it if they had, remains a moot point; what is obvious is that the Americans were now committed to the idea. Belousov did not insist on the South Pole, but promised to bring back to Moscow the alternative recommendations proposed at the conference.³⁴⁵ He was in no way confounded by Laclavère's suggestion, although the proposal to build and man a station at the most inaccessible

³⁴¹ Siple, P. 1959. *90 South: The story of the American South Pole Conquest*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons: 99.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Sullivan, W. 1961. *Assault on the Unknown. The International Geophysical Year*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.: 435 (in Notes: Chapter 18, footnote 2).

³⁴⁴ Ibid, 292.

³⁴⁵ Sullivan, W. 1961. *Assault on the Unknown. The International Geophysical Year*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.: 293.

point not only of the Antarctic continent, but of the entire planet, was an even more 'impossible' task than the American commitment to the Geographic South Pole.

When leaving the conference, Siple remarked that now there could be no backing away from 'doing the impossible'.³⁴⁶ This was also true for the Soviets, since many conference delegates considered their plans to be 'in the realm of fantasy'.³⁴⁷ The chief of the Directorate of the Northern Sea Route (Glavsevmorput) Vasiliy Burhanov, who was one of the Soviet delegates at the Paris conference, recalled that a delegate from another nation showed him a map of Antarctica with the Soviet bases deleted. When Burhanov questioned his colleague as to why this was done, he was told that the harsh climatic conditions at the proposed sites could not support life. It was considered impossible for the USSR to establish bases in such a hostile environment.³⁴⁸ However, like the Americans, the Soviets also felt that there could be no backing away from 'doing the impossible'; national pride served to strengthen their resolve to embark on the scientific conquest of their own Poles: the South Geomagnetic Pole and the Pole of Inaccessibility.

5.1 Objective

While there is ample literature in English outlining the American attempt at conquering the South Geographic Pole,³⁴⁹ literature in both English and Russian outlining the Soviet effort has not been coherently organized and remains rather scattered. The aim of this chapter is to construct a comprehensive record of the steps taken by the Soviet scientists in their attempt at conquering their Poles. Initial steps involved exploring the immediate vicinity of their coastal base *Mirny*, gradually extending further afield in order to observe and experience the conditions that would

³⁴⁶ Siple, P. 1959. *90 South: The story of the American South Pole Conquest*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons: 99.

³⁴⁷ Tryoshnikov, A. 1963. *Istoriya otkrytiya i issledovaniya Antarktidi [History of the discovery and investigation of Antarctica]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 260).

³⁴⁸ Cherevichniy, I. 1963. *V nebe Antarktidi [In the skies of Antarctica]*. Moscow: Morskoi transport (Marine Transport Press): 84.

³⁴⁹ See Siple, P. 1959. *90 South: The story of the American South Pole Conquest*. N.Y.: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 384 p.; Belanger, D. 2006. *Deep freeze. The United States, the International Geophysical Year, and the Origins of Antarctica's Age of Science*. Colorado: University Press of Colorado; Dufek, G. 1957. *Operation Deepfreeze*. N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 243 p.; Dufek, G. 1960. *Through the frozen frontier: the exploration of Antarctica*. Leicester: Brockhampton Press, 192 p.

be encountered towards the interior of the icy continent. These preliminary exploratory steps resulted in an unplanned fortuitous outcome which was a significant achievement for the USSR: it became the first IGY participant to establish a manned inner continental station in the Antarctic. The Soviet Antarctic expedition (SAE) also learnt some valuable lessons and drew conclusions from these observations and experiences which stimulated the development of new technology and tactics required to further advance the ultimate Soviet goal of building and manning bases on the South Geomagnetic Pole and the Pole of Inaccessibility.



Fig. 18. Aleksandr Gusev (personal collection of Leonid Dolgushin).

This chapter utilizes the written and oral recollections of several participants of the first and second SAE [Gusev (Fig 18), Dolgushin, Kapitsa, Kochetkov, Ruban and Tryoshnikov]; documents from the Russian State Economics Archive (RGAE) and Russian State Archives of Contemporary History (RGANI) in Moscow; Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute (AARI) in St Petersburg; and secondary sources (Belov, Nudelman and Savatyugin) to construct the record of the beginning of the Soviet attempt at conquering their Poles. It traces how the Soviets established the first ever manned inner continental base on the Antarctic continent in which four men wintered during the austral winter of 1956.

Richard Byrd has the distinction of being the first to spend the winter alone at the American Advance Base on the Ross Ice Shelf located 175 km from the American coastal base Little America II (altitude 130 m) in 1934.³⁵⁰ However, the

³⁵⁰ See: Byrd, R. 1938. *Alone*. London: Putnam, 302 pp.; Savatyugin, L. 2007. *Polus holoda* [Pole of Cold]. Unpublished manuscript; Tryoshnikov, A. 1963. *Istoriya otkrytiya i issledovaniya Antarktidi*.

Soviet party, consisting of Station leader Aleksandr Gusev (geophysicist), Leonid Dolgushin (glaciologist) (Fig. 19), Evgeniy Vetrov (radio operator) (Fig. 20) and Nikolai Kudryashov (tractor driver/mechanic) (Fig. 21), has the distinction of being the first to winter over at the initially unplanned *Pionerskaya* station 375 km from the Soviet coastal station *Mirny* at an altitude of 2741 m on the Antarctic ice cap.³⁵¹ The lowest temperature that these men experienced on 20th August was - 66.7° C and a wind velocity of 10 m/sec.³⁵² Although Byrd spent most of the winter of 1934 about 10° latitude farther south, he was almost at sea level and therefore at a much warmer temperature. At the latitude of *Pionerskaya* (69° 44' S) there are a few hours of daylight most of the winter; Richard Byrd was mostly in the dark all 'day'.³⁵³ The exploratory steps and experience gained by the Soviets in establishing *Pionerskaya* station were vital for future Soviet progress in their push towards the South Geomagnetic Pole and the Pole of Inaccessibility and deserves to be examined in detail, which is the purpose of this chapter.



Fig. 19. Leonid Dolgushin
(personal collection of Leonid Dolgushin)



Fig. 20. Evgeniy Vetrov

[*History of the discovery and investigation of Antarctica*]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press), 431 p.

³⁵¹ Lukin, V., N. Kornilov and N. Dmitriev 2006. *Sovetskiye i Rossiyskiye Antarkticheskiye ekspeditsii v tsifrah i faktah (1955-2005)* [*Soviet and Russian Antarctic expeditions – facts and figures (1995 – 2005)*]. St Petersburg: AARI: 435.

³⁵² Tryoshnikov, A. 1963. *Istoriya otkrytiya i issledovaniya Antarktidi*. [*History of the discovery and investigation of Antarctica*]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 277.

³⁵³ J. Behrendt, personal communication, December 2008.



Fig. 21. Nikolai Kudryashov (personal collection of Leonid Dolgushin)

5.2 Exploratory steps



led an aircraft expedition to the Arctic Pole of Inaccessibility in 1941 (Fig. 22. Ivan Cherevichniy (<http://mediateka.km.ru>).

The primary task of the first SAE was to commence preparations for the Soviet IGY program by building a main base on the coast of Antarctica (*Mirny*) from which to launch their drive into the interior of the continent.³⁵⁴ The operation was well thought out and organized as a series of exploratory forays, with each step expanding and building on the knowledge gained from the previous one. An integral role was dedicated to the aviation team led by Ivan Cherevichniy (1909 - 1971), a veteran Arctic aviator who had flown in the North Polar region since the 1930s and had

³⁵⁴ Gan, I. 2009. 'Will the Russians abandon Mirny to the penguins or... will they stay?' *Polar Record*, 45(233): 167-175; Gan, I. 2009. The reluctant hosts: Soviet Antarctic expedition ships visit Australia and New Zealand in 1956. *Polar Record* 45 (232), 37-50.



Fig. 23. Left to right: Li-2, Il-12, An-2 airplanes (personal collection of Leonid Dolgushin)

The SAE was supplied with six aircraft specially outfitted for polar conditions: four airplanes consisting of one Ilyushin 12 (Il-12), one Antonov 2 (An-2), two Lisunov 2 (Li-2) and two Mil' 4 (Mi-4) helicopters³⁵⁵ which were to be utilized initially for reconnaissance and later for supply of the planned inner continental bases (Fig. 23).

After officially opening the coastal base named *Mirny* on 13 February 1956, the expedition leader Mikhail Somov set out on 24 February to search for a suitable site for the station to be built on the South Geomagnetic Pole on board the Li-12 airplane crewed by Cherevichniy, Guriy Sorokin and Dmitriy Morozov. The round trip flight from *Mirny* to 78° S, 106° E covered a distance of 2800 km and lasted 9 hours 40 min.³⁵⁶ When flying over the first 500 km, it was noted that the sastrugi covered surface of the icecap rose steeply, while over the next 1000 km it flattened and gradually increased in altitude to the south to an estimated height of 3500 m.³⁵⁷ Byrd had previously flown over the South Geomagnetic Pole and informed Somov

³⁵⁵ Cherevichniy, I. 1959. Lyotchiki v Antarktide [Pilots in the Antarctic]. In Burhanov, V. (Ed). *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle* [On the far south land]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 140.

³⁵⁶ Denisov, I. and G. Bregman 1959. Kalendar kompleksnoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii [Chronicle of the composite Antarctic expedition]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed). *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle* [On the far south land]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 440.

³⁵⁷ Tryoshnikov, A. 1963. *Istoriya otkrytiya i issledovaniya Antarktidi*. [History of the discovery and investigation of Antarctica]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 271.

that it appeared that it would be very difficult to build a base on the proposed site and offered him the best of luck.³⁵⁸

A triangular reconnaissance flight in the direction of the Pole of Inaccessibility (*Mirny* – 76° S, 79° E – 76° S, 98° E – *Mirny*) was made on 3 March³⁵⁹ on the Il-12 airplane with the same contingent (except for Sorokin, whose place was taken by Aleksei Kash) and the surface of the ice cap was found to be similar to that noted on the previous flight. The Soviets used American maps based on US flights over the area in 1947 which indicated mountains situated 300 km from the coast. However, the Soviet party saw no sign of any mountains and decided that the Americans had mistaken a distant cloud bank for a mountain range.³⁶⁰ Perhaps the Americans did indeed see a cloud bank, but air navigation in 1947 and well into the 1960s was notoriously bad, and errors of greater than 100 km in the reported location of mountain peaks actually seen and photographed were not uncommon.³⁶¹

These exploratory flights provided useful information about the interior of the continent, but the scientific committee of the expedition decided that this information was still insufficient to fully understand the ground conditions where it was intended to build the bases. The committee determined that the next step was to actually try to land a party onto the sastrugi covered ice dome about 400 km from *Mirny* at an altitude of 3000m. The party was to spend several days studying the ice surface and the climatic conditions,³⁶² especially the degree of air-cooling, radio reception and magnetic deviation. The implications of the results of these studies would have a direct bearing on the next planning stage.

³⁵⁸ Glavsevmorput 1956. Stenogramma soveshchaniya u nachalnika GSMP Burhanova, 10 Aprelya. Informatsiya pribivshih iz Antarktiki tov. Avsyuk, Shumskiy i Markov [Transcript of the meeting with Burhanov, Chief of the Main Directorate of the Northern Sea Route. Information provided by Avsyuk, Shumskiy and Markov, 10 April 1956]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, f 9570, op 2, tom 2, ed hr 2583.

³⁵⁹ Denisov, I. and G. Bregman 1959. Kalendar kompleksnoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii [Chronicle of the composite Antarctic expedition]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed). *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle [On the far south land]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 441.

³⁶⁰ Tryoshnikov, A. 1963. *Istoriya otkrytiya i issledovaniya Antarktidi. [History of the discovery and investigation of Antarctica]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 271 -272.

³⁶¹ Behrendt, J. 2005. *The ninth circle: a memoir of life and death in Antarctica, 1960-1962*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press: 52-53.

³⁶² Gusev, A. 1959. Na ledyanom kupole Antarktidi [On the Antarctic ice dome]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed.). 1959. *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle [On the far south land]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 53.

On 5 March, the flight crew (Mikhail Chagin, Aleksei Chelyshev, Kash, Mikhail Kirillov) led by Gusev, who was an experienced alpinist,³⁶³ set out from *Mirny* on the An-2 ski plane (affectionately called *Annoushka*) and after two hours reached their proposed destination 400 km from *Mirny*, where they attempted a landing and take-off manoeuvre.³⁶⁴ The sastrugi were like 'frozen waves of an ocean'³⁶⁵ and a lack of oxygen at 3000 m led to loss of aircraft engine power, which made landing and take-off an incredibly bumpy and protracted affair, though not a total impossibility.

At the location 70° 10' S, 95° 40' E, the party set up a hemispherical tent developed for use by the Soviet Arctic drifting stations (Fig. 24) and spent five days conducting observations in temperatures as low as -45° C to -50° C, while the temperature at *Mirny* was -5° C.³⁶⁶ Gusev relates that the temperature inside the tent never climbed higher than -30° C, even with the use of a propane/butane gas heater, due to the fact that the cold from the three kilometre thick ice dome penetrated through the deer skin covered tent floor. This was the opposite effect to what happened in the Arctic, where the tent floor in winter tended to conduct the warmth from the underlying ocean, which is always above freezing point.³⁶⁷ The first taste of inner continental conditions: lack of oxygen due to the low air pressure at high altitude; extremely low temperatures and snow drifts, which kept burying the aircraft, indicated that the future work of the expedition would turn out to be unlike anything that these Arctic veterans had ever experienced.

³⁶³ Gusev, A. 1973. *V snegah Antarktidi [In the snows of Antarctica]*. Tryoshnikov, A. *Zakovanniy v led [Locked in ice]*. Moscow: Misl: 79-80; Ogni Mirnogo 1957. [The lights of Mirny]. Documentary film by A. Kochetkov. Krasnogorsk, Moscow region, Russia: Russian State Archives of Film and Photo Document [RGAKFD].

³⁶⁴ Gusev, A. 1959. Na ledyanom kupole Antarktidi [On the Antarctic ice dome]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed.). 1959. *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle [On the far south land]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 53-54.

³⁶⁵ Ogni Mirnogo. 1957 [The lights of Mirny]. Documentary film by A. Kochetkov, Krasnogorsk, Moscow region, Russia: Russian State Archives of Film and Photo Document [RGAKFD].

³⁶⁶ Tryoshnikov, A. 1963. *Istoriya otkrytiya i issledovaniya Antarktidi. [History of the discovery and investigation of Antarctica]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 272.

³⁶⁷ Gusev, A. 1959. Na ledyanom kupole Antarktidi [On the Antarctic ice dome]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed.). 1959. *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle [On the far south land]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 56.



Fig. 24. Soviet Arctic tents (<http://www.vokrugsveta.ru/vs/article/2797/>)

5.3 Preparatory traverses

Initially, it was envisaged that the inner continental stations were to be built utilizing primarily the aircraft fleet for supplying building materials and labour.³⁶⁸ However, after Gusev's short foray into the interior, it became obvious that this plan would need to be reassessed. The scientific committee of the expedition, after discussing the first experience of the interior work done by Gusev and the aviators, decided to send a traverse 'at least a small distance from *Mirny*' to do further research of the interior.³⁶⁹ This was conveyed to the Minister of the Merchant Fleet responsible for the expedition, Victor Bakaev, who reported to the Council of Ministers of the USSR on 21 March 1956 that 'due to the immense difficulties of establishing the stations with the aid of aviation alone, a plan was prepared to use tractor trains which were to be supported by the aircraft. Bearing this aim in mind, the first 50 km long trial traverse into the interior to an altitude 900 m on two full-track all terrain vehicles was organized.'³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ Bakaev, V. 1956. V TsK KPSS, 21 Marta 1956 [To the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 21 March]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Noveishei istorii (Russian State Archives of Contemporary History) RGANI, Fond 5, op 30, delo 181.

³⁶⁹ Tryoshnikov, A. 1963. *Istoriya otkrytiya i issledovaniya Antarktidi* [History of the discovery and investigation of Antarctica]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 273.

³⁷⁰ Bakaev, V. 1956. V TsK KPSS, 21 Marta 1956 [To the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 21 March]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Noveishei istorii (Russian State Archives of Contemporary History) RGANI, Fond 5, op 30, delo 181.

Prior to the traverse setting out, the area around *Mirny* was carefully explored, since it was known that the station was surrounded by a semicircular zone of crevasses. In order to find a safe route through the zone, glaciologists first flew over the area, after which they continued their observations on foot while roped together in case one of them fell into an unseen crevasse. They managed to locate a narrow passage between the crevasses 3 km west of *Mirny* suitable for the tractor sleds to pass.³⁷¹



Fig. 25. GAZ 67 all terrain vehicle (personal collection of Leonid Dolgushin)

On 14 March 1956, a trial traverse using two red Gorky Automotive Plant all terrain vehicles (GAZ 67) (Fig. 25) driven by Valentin Korsak and Konstantin Italiansev and led by glaciologist Dolgushin accompanied by geophysicist Andrei Kapitsa, geologist Oleg Vyalov and journalist Evgeniy Ryabchikov left *Mirny* on their 50 km journey. Every kilometre the vehicles stopped to put up a bamboo marker pole and take altitude readings. It was found that the ice dome rose fairly steeply to 400 m over the first ten kilometres and then more gradually to 700 m at the 50 km mark.³⁷² The trial traverse had successfully negotiated the dangerous zone of

³⁷¹ Tryoshnikov, A. 1963. *Istoriya otkrytiya i issledovaniya Antarktidi*. [History of the discovery and investigation of Antarctica]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 273.

³⁷² Dolgushin 2006. *Antarktida 1955-1957. Fotorasskaz o pervoi Sovetskoi ekspeditsii v Antarktidu i zimovke na pervoi vnutrikontinentalnoi stantsii Pionerskaya* [Antarctica 1955-1957. Photographic Account of the first Soviet expedition to Antarctica and wintering at the first inner continental station Pionerskaya]. Moscow: Published by author: 60; Gusev 1973. *V Snegah Antarktidi* [In the snows of Antarctica]. Tryoshnikov, A. *Zakovanniy v led* [Locked in ice]. Moscow: Misl: 89; Kapitsa 2007. *Pervie pohodi v Antarktide (iz Antarkticheskogo dnevnika)* [First traverses in Antarctica (From the Antarctic diary)]. *Zemlia i Vselennaya* (The Earth and the Universe) 4: 72-73.

crevasses and had found and marked the exit to the plateau, proving that it was possible for the tractors to get through towards the interior.

With the exit to the plateau marked, an improvised traverse with eleven men led by Mikhail Somov using two S-80 tractors, which were originally intended only for unloading the ship, set out in late autumn on 2 April 1956 towards the point where the An-2 had landed a month before, 400 km from *Mirny* at an altitude of 3000 m. Three sledges carrying living quarters, scientific equipment, kitchen and food stores and ninety-six drums of fuel were attached to each tractor.³⁷³ The traverse aimed to reach the planned destination and return to *Mirny* within twenty to thirty days.³⁷⁴

Progress was very slow and treacherous: two men roped together walked ahead of their machines to look out for crevasses and find a safe route,³⁷⁵ since men on foot could hear a hollow sound of a crevasse beneath their feet, whereas a 'tractor was deaf and blind' (Fig. 26).³⁷⁶



Fig. 26. Left to right: Leonid Dolgushin and Mikhail Somov walking in front of the tractor train (personal collection of Leonid Dolgushin)

³⁷³ Gusev, A. 1973. *V snegah Antarktidi* [In the snows of Antarctica]. Tryoshnikov, A. *Zakovanniy v led* [Locked in ice]. Moscow: Misl: 86, 87.

³⁷⁴ Ibid, 86.

³⁷⁵ Ibid, 90.

³⁷⁶ Ruban, I. 1985. *Ludi, ldi, vstrechi* [People, ice, encounters]. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 121, 122

After travelling some 20 km, it became obvious that the weight of the cargo was too much for the tractors to handle, and one sledge with a supply of fuel was uncoupled and left behind. This was to have repercussions for the future of the traverse.³⁷⁷ Every 50 km, pyramid-shaped markers were placed on the ice to designate their route³⁷⁸ and were later used to calculate the movement of the continental ice cover.³⁷⁹

On 11 April, 150 km from *Mirny*, weather conditions deteriorated rapidly and the traverse was almost buried by snowdrift caused by a blizzard which lasted for eight days. On 19 April the wind died down enough for the men to dig out the snow-covered tractors and sledges and continue the journey (Fig. 27).³⁸⁰ For the next two days the traverse was on a twenty-four hour per day regimen, crossing an area of tall sastrugi until another blizzard again brought it to a halt. The fuel supply was rapidly becoming depleted, and it became obvious that the traverse would be unable to reach the 400 km mark and return to *Mirny* as had been planned.



Fig. 27. Snow-covered traverse (personal collection of Leonid Dolgushin).

³⁷⁷ Gusev, A. 1959. Na ledyanom kupole Antarktidi [On the Antarctic ice dome]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed) 1959. Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle [On the far south land]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 65.

³⁷⁸ Tryoshnikov, A. 1963. Istoriya otkrytiya i issledovaniya Antarktidi. [History of the discovery and investigation of Antarctica]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press). : 274.

³⁷⁹ Gusev, A. 1973. V snegah Antarktidi [In the snows of Antarctica]. Tryoshnikov, A. Zakovannii v led [Locked in ice]. Moscow: Misl: 92.

³⁸⁰ Ibid, 92-93.

5.4 A change in plans

Somov recognized that the lack of fuel demanded a change in plans. He consulted with his colleagues and after further radio discussions with headquarters in Moscow decided not to turn the traverse back to *Mirny*, but to continue on as far as the fuel supply would allow. The tractors and sledges would be modified and reconfigured, further building and food supplies would be flown in from the main base, and a temporary scientific observatory established in the interior of the continent.³⁸¹ This was to be the first manned inner continental station built in the Antarctic interior which would provide valuable knowledge about winter conditions at a location at such a distance from the coast. It was believed that these conditions would be similar to those to be encountered at their final destinations - the South Geomagnetic Pole and Pole of Inaccessibility, and that the experience and knowledge thus gained would be of benefit when planning for the more onerous task of reaching these ultimate goals. Considering the lateness of the season, the approaching polar night and plummeting temperatures, the spontaneous idea of establishing a new base posed quite a challenge. It required immediate attention and necessitated Somov's presence back at *Mirny*, where he and Dolgushin returned on 22 April on one of the two airplanes that had flown in 700 kg of supplies,³⁸² leaving Gusev in charge of the traverse (Fig. 28).

³⁸¹ Gusev, A. 1973. *V snegah Antarktidi [In the snows of Antarctica]*. Tryoshnikov, A. *Zakovannii v led [Locked in ice]*. Moscow: Misl: 94.

³⁸² Tryoshnikov, A. 1963. *Istoriya otkrytiya i issledovaniya Antarktidi. [History of the discovery and investigation of Antarctica]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 274.



Fig. 28. An-2 supplies the traverse (personal collection of Leonid Dolgushin).

Every time the traverse stopped, snowdrifts covered the tractors and sledges, and needed to be cleared away before the traverse could continue. Over the next three days it managed to cover about 75 km when the air temperature dropped to -60°C , causing the metal steering rods to become brittle and break. An attempt to replace them with metal cables was unsuccessful, since the cables ‘snapped like cotton thread’³⁸³ in the frigid temperatures. With the approaching polar night, daylight hours dwindled rapidly and the men were forced to walk ahead in the beam of the tractor headlights looking out for crevasses (Fig. 29).

³⁸³ Gusev, A. 1959. Na ledyanom kupole Antarktidi [On the Antarctic ice dome]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed). 1959. Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle [On the far south land]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 66.



Fig. 29. Igor Ruban. Into the heart of Antarctica.
(<http://www.polarpost.ru/Library/Litinskiy/main-drifingrossiya.html>).

A Li-2 reconnaissance aircraft sent from *Mirny* on the 25 April advised that the traverse had successfully negotiated the crevasse zone and that there were no more crevasses to be encountered.³⁸⁴ They pushed on and from 2 May began searching for a relatively level site suitable to build a base and a landing strip for an airplane to bring in supplies from *Mirny*. On 4 May Gusev received a telegram from Somov advising him to halt the traverse. The traverse made a final stop at a position with the co-ordinates 69° 44' S, 95° 30' E, elevation 2,700 m 375 km from *Mirny* (Fig. 30).

³⁸⁴ Nudelman, A. 1959. *Sovetskie ekspeditsii v Antarktiku 1955-1959* [Soviet expeditions to the Antarctic, 1955-1959]. Moscow: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk SSSR: 55; Gusev, A. 1973. *V snegah Antarktidi* [In the snows of Antarctica]. Tryoshnikov, A. *Zakovanniy v led* [Locked in ice]. Moscow: Misl: 97.

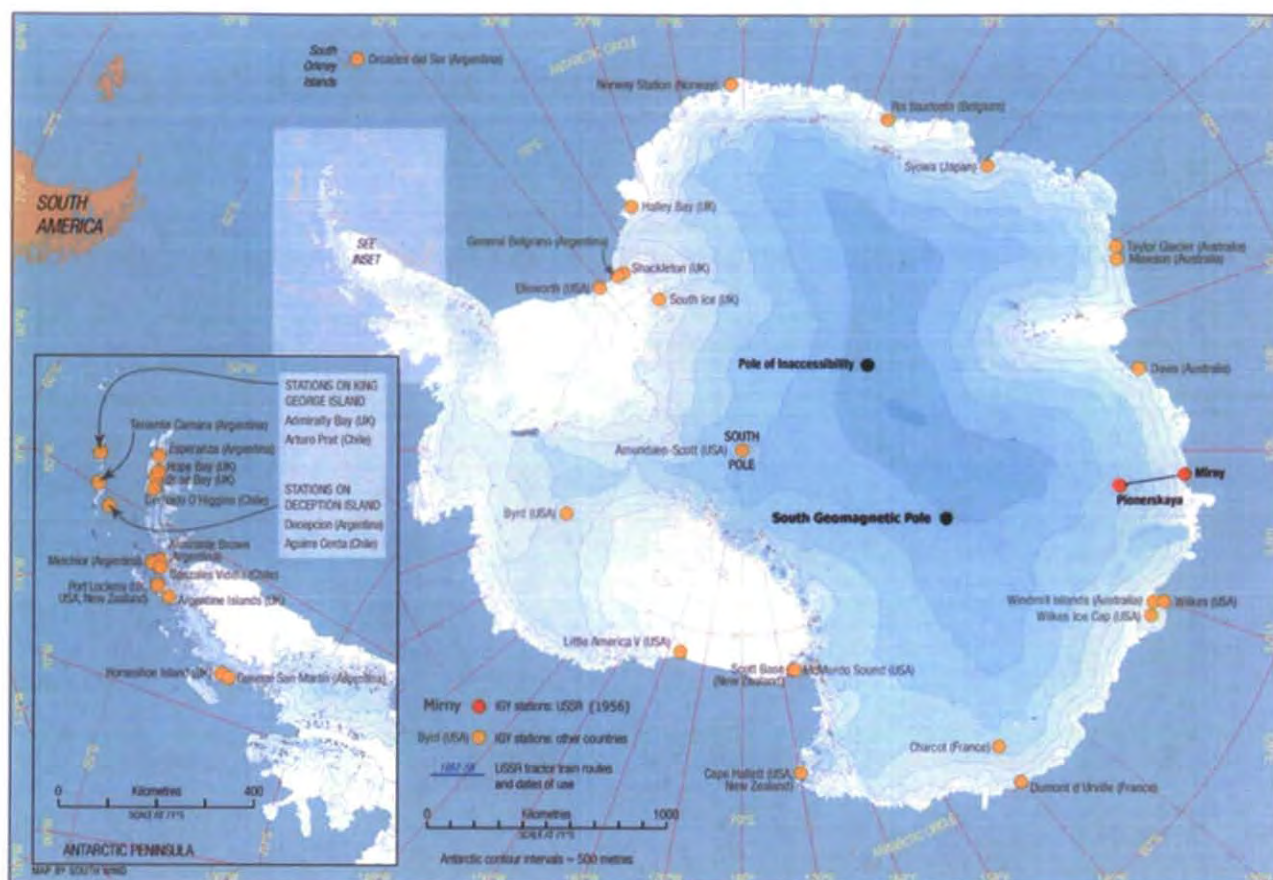


Fig. 30. Map of Antarctica showing traverse route *Mirny-Pionerskaya*
(Adapted from 'Map of Antarctic research during the IGY 1956 – 1959'.
Moscow: Ministry of the Merchant Fleet of the USSR, 1959)

Provisions, building materials and carpenter Petr Firsov arrived from *Mirny* on the An-2 airplane, and building commenced using the existing superstructure of the sledges and the newly delivered materials. After unloading, the aircraft attempted to take-off, but unluckily hit one of the surrounding sastrugi and sustained damage to its skis, which left it grounded until the damage could be repaired. Spare parts were sent from *Mirny* on 6 May and a 1300 m landing strip was prepared to allow the larger Li-2 airplane to land. While the strip was long enough for the plane to land and deliver its cargo, it was found to be not quite long enough for take-off; the Li-2 damaged its landing gear, though not badly enough to prevent it from leaving the same day with Boris Vtyurin, Mikhail Komarov and Pavel Senko on board.³⁸⁵

The An-2 was repaired over the next eight days, and on 14 May was able to finally return to *Mirny* with aerologist Aleksandr Shchekin on board, leaving six people to continue construction.³⁸⁶ Supplies, however, were once again running low, but the combination of foul weather and the darkness of the polar night prevented any new deliveries. Only by the end of May did an aircraft manage to drop food supplies for the future station, with Gusev becoming almost poetic when he described how the sky opened up like a 'horn of plenty and many wonderful things falling out': crates containing cans of meat, cocoa, condensed milk, sugar, sausages, packets of meat, chicken, bread and many other foodstuffs.³⁸⁷ Unfortunately, the wind scattered the parachutes with attached crates over a wide area, and considerable effort was expended in retrieving them. Building works continued and were at long last completed by 27 May 1956, when the first Soviet Antarctic inner continental research station was officially opened. It was named *Pionerskaya* (Fig. 31) as a dual tribute to the pioneering achievement of the Soviet expedition in the Antarctic and to the communist children's organization, the 'Pionery' (Pioneers). The first step to the

³⁸⁵ Denisov, I. and G. Bregman 1959. Kalendar kompleksnoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii [Chronicle of the composite Antarctic expedition]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed). *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle* [On the far south land]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 443.

³⁸⁶ Gusev, A. 1973. *V snegah Antarktidi* [In the snows of Antarctica]. Tryoshnikov, A. *Zakovanniy v led* [Locked in ice]. Moscow: Misl: 99; Denisov, I. and G. Bregman 1959. Kalendar kompleksnoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii [Chronicle of the composite Antarctic expedition]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed). *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle* [On the far south land]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 443.

³⁸⁷ Gusev, A. 1973. *V snegah Antarktidi* [In the snows of Antarctica]. Tryoshnikov, A. *Zakovanniy v led* [Locked in ice]. Moscow: Misl: 105.

Poles was symbolically likened to the child's first step towards becoming a fully fledged member of the Communist Party.



Fig. 31. Igor Ruban. *Pionerskaya* station.
(<http://www.polarpost.ru/Library/Litinskiy/main-drifingrossiya.html>)

On 6 June, pilot Cherevichniy flew in on the Li -2 aircraft with supplies and exchange personnel, but the landing strip was obliterated by a blizzard which covered it with sastrugi. He was unable to make a landing and returned to *Mirny*. The men at the station worked on the strip over the next twenty-four hours and succeeded in preparing the surface for another attempt at landing on 7 June, which this time was successful. More supplies and equipment were delivered, as well as two men who were to stay the winter: radio operator Vetrov and glaciologist Dolgushin. The An-2 plane, which was expected to bring two barrels of fuel and a tractor driver/mechanic to replace Kudryashov was unable to locate the new station and barely made it back to *Mirny*. Vitaliy Babarykin, German Malikov, Andrei Kapitsa and Petr Firsov returned to *Mirny* on the Li-2,³⁸⁸ leaving four people to winter in the Antarctic interior: station leader Aleksandr Gusev, tractor driver/mechanic Nikolai Kudryashov, glaciologist Leonid Dolgushin and radio operator Evgeniy Vetrov. These Antarctic pioneers were to spend the next five winter months with no other human contact until 17 November 1956 when the An-2 arrived with a relieving party, although air drops of provisions and fuel were effected on 22 June (1 ton of

³⁸⁸ Denisov, I. and G. Bregman 1959. Kalendar kompleksnoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii [Chronicle of the composite Antarctic expedition]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed). *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle* [On the far south land]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 444.

provisions), 28 August (Li-2 provisions and fuel) and 5 October (IL-12 1.8 ton cargo).³⁸⁹ Meteorological, magnetic, astronomical, glaciological, aerological and other scientific observations were constantly conducted, both while the traverse was travelling and after it was transformed into a base and had settled in for the winter.

5.5 Conclusion

Back in Moscow, at a meeting on 10 April 1956, Glavsevmorput was most impressed with the progress of the traverse. The push south with winter rapidly approaching was acknowledged to be 'an unprecedented undertaking... which was undoubtedly worth the whole expedition.'³⁹⁰ Somov also appreciated the importance of this first foray into the interior: he understood that 'observations conducted in *Mirny* and *Pionerskaya* will shed light on the possibility of a lengthy stay of men in the regions situated still closer to the centre of the continent, and help to solve the question of whether future plans for advancing to the south... are practicable'.³⁹¹ Many lessons were learnt with regard to inner continental Antarctic topography, temperature, climate, human endurance and about the limitations of the equipment required to operate in such extreme conditions. These lessons were invaluable in future planning, design and development of new more suitable equipment, clothing and selection of personnel.

The significance of the Soviet achievement was not lost on the neighbouring IGY national Antarctic expeditions, which would also benefit from the Soviet experience. Bill Bewsher, the Officer in Charge of the Australian *Mawson* station, sent a radiogram to the newly opened station expressing his 'heartly congratulations on the successful establishment of Pioneer stop A fine accomplishment soon after the

³⁸⁹ Denisov, I. and G. Bregman 1959. Kalendar kompleksnoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii [Chronicle of the composite Antarctic expedition]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed). *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle [On the far south land]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 445, 448 and 449.

³⁹⁰ Glavsevmorput 1956, Stenogramma soveschaniya u nachalnika GSMP Burhanova, 10 Aprelya 1956. Informatsiya pribivshih iz Antarktiki tov. Avsyuk, Shumskiy i Markov [Transcript of the meeting with Burhanov, Head of the Main Directorate of the Northern Sea Route. Information provided by Avsyuk, Shumskiy and Markov, 10 April 1956]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives] RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2583.

³⁹¹ Somov, M. 1957. In the Antarctic continent. Translated into English by Bureau for translations in Ottawa. *Priroda* (Nature), Moscow, No 11. Kingston, Tasmania, Australia: Australian Antarctic Division Library Special Collection: 1.

establishment of *Mirny*.³⁹² The Australians were later thankful that they were able 'to draw on Russian experience with long-distance heavy tractor transport on the Antarctic plateau. The information gained proved useful when we undertook our inland journey'.³⁹³ The French base on Terre Adélie also sent congratulations and asked the Soviets to share with them the 'conditions and with which means you could success in the building of your station (sic)'.³⁹⁴ Commander Herbert Whitney, the American naval officer responsible for all Antarctic naval station construction wrote in Russian that 'we consider your operations to be very interesting' and wished them all the best from the US expedition.³⁹⁵

The first SAE had not reached either the South Geomagnetic Pole or the Pole of Inaccessibility, but a promising start had been made. A 'large and elaborate'



coastal base *Mirny*³⁹⁶ had been established from which to launch an assault on the interior. Airplanes had made a reconnaissance flight to the proposed station site at the South Geomagnetic Pole and another flight towards the Pole of Inaccessibility. A small party had landed on the Polar plateau and spent several days conducting observations. The area around *Mirny* was explored, a way through the

surrounding crevasses was found and a short trial traverse had marked an exit to the plateau. A larger traverse had used the exit to travel 375 km into the Antarctic interior and build the first inner continental Antarctic station, which was to be

³⁹² *Ogni Mirnogo*. 1957 [The lights of *Mirny*]. Documentary film by A. Kochetkov. Krasnogorsk, Moscow region, Russia: Russian State Archives of Film and Photo Document [RGAKFD]; Gusev, A. 1973. *V snegah Antarktidi* [In the snows of Antarctica]. Tryoshnikov, A. *Zakovanniy v led* [Locked in ice]. Moscow: Misl: 106; see Gan, I. 2009. The reluctant hosts: Soviet Antarctic expedition ships visit Australia and New Zealand in 1956. *Polar Record* 45 (232): 37-50.

³⁹³ Mather, K. 1957. ANARE Executive Planning Committee report on USSR Antarctic station at *Mirny* September 1957. Kingston, Tasmania, Australia: Australian Antarctic Division Library Special Collection.

³⁹⁴ *Ogni Mirnogo*. 1957 [The lights of *Mirny*]. Documentary film by A. Kochetkov. Krasnogorsk, Moscow region, Russia: Russian State Archives of Film and Photo Document [RGAKFD].

³⁹⁵ *Ibid*; Gusev, A. 1973. *V snegah Antarktidi* [In the snows of Antarctica]. Tryoshnikov, A. *Zakovanniy v led* [Locked in ice]. Moscow: Misl: 106

³⁹⁶ Law, P. 1956. Report on visit to USSR base at *Mirny*. Kingston, Tasmania, Australia: Australian Antarctic Division Library Special Collection.

manned year round till the end of the IGY. (Fig 32. Postal stamp on the occasion of closing *Pionerskaya* station (<http://www.philately.h14.ru/antarkt.html#a11>)).

This unplanned station, *Pionerskaya*, had given the SAE a head start in preparing for its national IGY program and had provided vital experience which was critical for successfully reaching the goal of building bases on the South Geomagnetic Pole and the Pole of Inaccessibility. But it was the men of the SAE who strived to secure for their homeland the honour of achieving their goal and to 'bring back a rich harvest of scientific results.'³⁹⁷ Like Scott, Amundsen, Byrd and others who went before them, they displayed the same distinctive 'courage and endurance'³⁹⁸ in their attempt at 'doing the impossible.'³⁹⁹ And although *Pionerskaya* station no longer appears on contemporary maps of Antarctica, the route travelled by the first Soviet explorers is still used by the annual Russian traverses to this day.

³⁹⁷ Mountevans, E. 1958. *South with Scott*. London and Glasgow: Collins: 1.

³⁹⁸ Bixby, W. 1961. *Alone*. London: Putnam: 163.

³⁹⁹ Siple, P. 1959. *90 South. The story of the American South Pole Conquest*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons: 99.

ASSAULT ON THE INTERIOR. ESTABLISHING THE IGY SOVIET ANTARCTIC INNER CONTINENTAL STATIONS⁴⁰⁰

This chapter continues to examine the pioneering 'assault on the interior' of the second composite Soviet Antarctic expedition (SAE) in its attempt to establish stations in the unexplored and most inaccessible areas of the Antarctic continent: the South Geomagnetic Pole and the Pole of Inaccessibility. The setbacks and obstacles encountered by this expedition drove the development of new Soviet technology and techniques to be applied in the hitherto unknown Antarctic conditions. The chapter will also briefly mention the first and third expeditions without touching on their other essential ingredient, the actual scientific investigations that were conducted concurrently during their operations.

The journey towards the interior was seen as a step by step progress and is reflected in the naming of the stations. *Pionerskaya*, the first interior station, was named for the 'Pionery' (pioneers), the Communist Children's Organization; the second intermediate station, *Komsomolskaya* was named for the 'Komsomol', the Communist Youth League and the station planned for the Pole of Inaccessibility was *Sovetskaya*, named for the Soviets (councils) which were made up of fully fledged Communist Party members (Fig. 33).

⁴⁰⁰ This chapter is based on a paper which is in Press: Barr, S. (Ed.) *From Pole to Pole*. Vol 1. Springer Press (Germany).

6.1 Preparations

A decree of the USSR Council of Ministers of 13 July 1955 established the composite Soviet Antarctic expedition, which was to consist of two parts: a continental expedition and a marine expedition. The first was to operate on the icy continent year round, whereas the second was to conduct research using expedition ships in coastal Antarctic waters and in the open sea.⁴⁰¹ Scientists, aviators, mariners and other support personnel who had wide experience of working in the Arctic were assigned to the Antarctic IGY effort.

The Academy of Sciences of the USSR was instrumental in formulating the research programs and logistic support was to be provided by the Directorate of the Northern Sea Route (Glavsevmorput), the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet department responsible for Arctic research. The leaders selected for the first (1955 - 1957), second (1956 - 1958) and third (1957 - 1959) composite Soviet Antarctic expeditions (SAE) were oceanographer Mikhail Mikhailovich Somov; geographers Aleksei Fedorovich Tryoshnikov; and Evgeniy Ivanovich Tolstikov. Each had previously headed the Soviet Arctic *Severniy Polus* (North Pole) drifting stations SP2, SP3 and SP 4 respectively.

Two of the USSR's most modern icebreakers, the *Ob* and *Lena*, and a support vessel *Refrigerator 7* were fitted out for the first SAE. Its complement of 429 expeditioners and crew⁴⁰² was to make preparations for the requirements of the Soviet IGY commitment, including building a coastal base *Mirny*, which was opened on 13 February 1956. Additional aims of the expedition were selecting sites for the inner continental polar stations *Vostok* at the South Geomagnetic Pole, and *Sovetskaya* at the Pole of Inaccessibility.

⁴⁰¹ Korotkevich, E. and L. Dubrovin 1984. Two decades of Soviet Research in the Antarctic. In: Avsyuk, G. *The Antarctic Committee report. Main results of twenty years' research in the Antarctic*. Washington: American Publishing Co: 3.

⁴⁰² Nesmeyanov, N. and V. Bakayev 1957. *Kratkiye itogi raboty kontinentalnoi chasti kompleksnoi Antarkticheskoi expedititsii AN SSSR 1955-1957, 3 Iyunya 1957* [A brief summary of the results of the continental component of the CAE of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR 1955-1957, 3 June 1957]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2589.

The associated exploratory tractor-sledge foray into the interior of the continent resulted in the establishment on 27 May 1956 of the research station *Pionerskaya* (altitude 2700 m) at a site located 375 km from the coastal base. Another station, *Oasis*, was established on 15 October 1956, 360 km to the east of *Mirny* in the Bunger Hills on an enigmatic ice-free part of the coast.

From his base at *Mirny*, the expedition leader Somov had also undertaken reconnaissance flights to the South Geomagnetic Pole and towards the Pole of Inaccessibility.⁴⁰³ His observations indicated that the projected aim of building inner continental scientific observatories by hauling all necessary building material, fuel and equipment over the treacherous icy dome in deep snow at altitudes of 3400 – 4000 m on tractor-sledges would test men and equipment to the limit. The distance to be covered from *Mirny* was 1410 km to the South Geomagnetic Pole, located at an altitude of 3488 m and 2100 km to the Pole of Inaccessibility, located at an altitude of 3719 m.⁴⁰⁴

6.2 The attempts

The onerous task of actually building the stations *Vostok* at the South Geomagnetic Pole and *Sovetskaya* at the Pole of Inaccessibility⁴⁰⁵ as well as the intermediate base station *Komsomolskaya* was left to the 625 man second SAE led by Tryoshnikov. After arriving at *Mirny*, he had a tractor-sledge train outfitted, and made ready to venture out to establish a foothold in preparation for the assault on the two poles. A team of ten men with three tractors hauling six sledges containing scientific equipment and huts set out on 14 February 1957 along the crevasse and

⁴⁰³ Belov, M. 1969. *Istoriya otkritiya i issledovaniya* [History of discovery and exploration]. In: Tolstikov, E. (Ed). *Atlas Antarktiki Tom II* [Atlas of Antarctica Vol II]. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 84.

⁴⁰⁴ Lukin, V., N. Kornilov and N. Dmitriev. 2006. *Sovetskiye i Rossiyskiye Antarkticheskiye ekspeditsii v tsifrah i faktah (1955-2005)* [Soviet and Russian Antarctic expeditions – facts and figures (1955 – 2005)]. St Petersburg: AARI: 436-437.

⁴⁰⁵ Bakaev, V. 1956. V Sovet Ministrov SSSR, 29 Oktyabrya 1956 [To the Council of Ministers of the USSR, 29 October 1956]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2584.

sastrugi-covered terrain to *Pionerskaya* towards the proposed site of *Komsomolskaya*.⁴⁰⁶

The rugged terrain and frigid conditions took their toll on fuel consumption. On 7 March, having travelled 860 km and reached an altitude of 3500 m, the traverse almost ran out of fuel by the time it reached the proposed site for *Komsomolskaya* station. The expeditioners prepared to winter at the site, expecting supplementary fuel and supplies to be delivered by aircraft from *Mirny*. However, this did not prove feasible when the approaching polar night sent temperatures plummeting to -70°C , making further aviation extremely dangerous: 'all metal and plastic aircraft parts became as brittle as glass.'⁴⁰⁷ Tryoshnikov, fearing for the safety of his personnel, ordered the leader of the traverse Pelevin to evacuate his men and mothball the station till spring. The last three evacuees managed to take off on a plane filled with just enough fuel to reach *Pionerskaya* on 24 March when the temperature reached -65°C .⁴⁰⁸

A second traverse, led by Averianov and consisting of eighteen men and five tractors towing ten sledges left *Mirny* on 28 February, two weeks after the first.⁴⁰⁹ It followed the same route, but its mission was to establish a new station *Vostok* on the South Geomagnetic Pole. Being late autumn, the environmental conditions became increasingly more difficult: temperatures below -50°C led to mechanical failure as the tractors sank into the loose, porous snow.⁴¹⁰ After covering a distance of 620 km, the traverse faltered and ground to a halt on 18 March.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁶ Nudelman, A. 1966. *Soviet Antarctic Expeditions 1955 – 1959*. Jerusalem: Israel Program for Scientific translations: 58.

⁴⁰⁷ Tryoshnikov, A., 1959. Na ledyanom kontinente [On the icy continent]. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed.). *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle [On the far south land]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 215.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Tryoshnikov, A. 1960. *Vtoraya kontinentalnaya expeditcia 1956-1958. Materialy nabludeniy [Second continental expedition. Observational data]*. Leningrad: Morskoi transport (Marine Transport Press): 189; Savatyugin, L. 2007. *Polus holoda [Pole of Cold]*. Unpublished manuscript.

⁴¹⁰ Somov, M. 1957. In the Antarctic continent. Translated into English by Bureau for translations in Ottawa. *Priroda (Nature)*, Moscow, No 11. Kingston, Tasmania, Australia: Australian Antarctic Division Library Special Collection: 9.

⁴¹¹ Tryoshnikov, A. 1960. *Vtoraya kontinentalnaya expeditcia 1956-1958. Materialy nabludeniy [Second continental expedition. Observational data]*. Leningrad: Morskoi transport (Marine transport): 10, 172.

News of these difficulties raised concerns at the Directorate of the Northern Sea Route operational headquarters about the ability of the expedition to achieve its objectives. Averianov was urged to push on to at least 650 km and open a temporary intermediate station on the Antarctic plateau.⁴¹² The traverse laboriously pressed on for a further 15 km, but the altitude of 3252 m, combined with the harsh early winter conditions, were an obstacle impossible to overcome. With the tractor - train unable to proceed, Tryoshnikov made the decision for the 635 km mark to become the site of the interim *Vostok 1* station, which was officially opened on 12 April 1957.⁴¹³ The seven men who were left to man the station and conduct research over winter endured extreme privations: they suffered from altitude sickness, temperatures of - 80° C and severe frostbite. Tryoshnikov reported that had he known of the 'natural conditions of a severity hitherto unknown to mankind'⁴¹⁴ prevailing at *Vostok 1*, he would never have allowed his men to stay there for winter.

Glavsevmorput feared that the evacuation of *Komsomolskaya*, mechanical failure, unexpected excessive fuel consumption and the severe conditions at *Vostok 1* indicated that the Soviet IGY program may be in jeopardy.⁴¹⁵ Plans for building bases on the South Geomagnetic Pole and Pole of Inaccessibility were in danger of collapse, and immediate measures needed to be taken to ward off this danger. The accumulated knowledge gained during the first and second SAE led the Deputy Director of Glavsevmorput, Tolstikov, to conclude that the solution lays in utilizing specially designed technical support and a more rigorous health screening of personnel. He made the decision to assume the leadership of the third SAE himself, with the objective of handpicking his men and organizing the design and

⁴¹² Tolstikov, A. 1980. *Na polyusah Antarktidy [On the Poles of Antarctica]*. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 19.

⁴¹³ Lukin, V., N. Kornilov and N. Dmitriev. 2006. *Sovetskiye i Rossiyskiye Antarkticheskiye ekspeditsii v tsifrah i faktah (1955-2005) [Soviet and Russian Antarctic expeditions – facts and figures (1955 – 2005)]*. St Petersburg: AARI: 436.

⁴¹⁴ Somov, M. 1957. In the Antarctic continent. Translated into English by Bureau for translations in Ottawa. *Priroda* (Nature), Moscow, No 11. Kingston, Tasmania, Australia: Australian Antarctic Division Library Special Collection: 9.

⁴¹⁵ Tolstikov, A. 1980. *Na polyusah Antarktidy [On the Poles of Antarctica]*. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 18.

development of specialized equipment. Orders were placed for a new solid fuel,⁴¹⁶ turbo equipped aircraft,⁴¹⁷ 'Penguin' tractors, sledges, navigational aids and protective clothing more suited to inner continental Antarctic reality. Tolstikov also suggested that *Sovetskaya* station be built not on the Pole of Inaccessibility, but as an intermediate half way station within range of a Li-2 aircraft flying out of *Komsomolskaya* station.⁴¹⁸

6.3 Partial Success

Meanwhile, Tryoshnikov was determined that the second SAE achieve as much of its program as possible. He attributed the delay in setting out for the interior to the late arrival of his expedition at *Mirny* and attempted to make up for lost time by thorough planning for the coming summer season during the winter hiatus. He resumed his assault on the Antarctic interior on 8 October by leading a traverse from *Mirny* to *Vostok 1* and on to the mothballed *Komsomolskaya* station, which he manned and opened on 6 November.⁴¹⁹ The traverse continued on in the direction of the South Geomagnetic Pole for 280 km, where an intermediate supply depot was established. It then turned back to *Komsomolskaya*, which it reached on 17 November.⁴²⁰ After reviewing plans and co-coordinating actions, the crew went on to *Vostok 1* to assist in transporting the huts and supplies to the South Geomagnetic Pole. On 20 November they arrived at *Vostok 1* and began excavations to extricate the temporary station, which had been buried under the winter snowdrifts, from its blanket of snow. Work was completed by 1 December when the augmented traverse was able to set forth and cover the distance of 775 km to the South Geomagnetic

⁴¹⁶ Tolstikov, A. 1958. Losevu, Insitut goryuchih iskopaemih, 25 Iyulia [To Losev, Institute of fuel, 25 July 1958]. Moscow, Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives], File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

⁴¹⁷ Nudelman, A. 1966. *Soviet Antarctic Expeditions 1955 – 1959*. Jerusalem: Israel Program for Scientific translations: 32.

⁴¹⁸ Tolstikov, E. 1980. *Na polyusah Antarktidy [On the Poles of Antarctica]*. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 20, 42.

⁴¹⁹ Tryoshnikov, A. 1959. Na ledyanom kontinente. In: Burhanov, V. (Ed). *Na samoi yuzhnoi zemle [On the far south land]*. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 220

⁴²⁰ Nudelman, A. 1966. *Soviet Antarctic Expeditions 1955 – 1959*. Jerusalem: Israel Program for Scientific translations: 61.

Pole in fifteen days.⁴²¹ The next day, on 16 December, *Vostok* station was officially opened on the South Geomagnetic Pole. Against great odds, Tryoshnikov had overcome the previous setbacks and showed that the Soviet IGY plans were attainable and now seemed to be within reach.

6.4 The Last Hurdle

It was now up to Tolstikov and the third SAE (1957 - 1959) to continue the battle of man and machine against the hostile elements to secure a foothold and establish a station on the most inaccessible site of the Antarctic continent. It was fortunate that this expedition had consolidated and built on the knowledge acquired by the first two expeditions, since the conditions that it encountered were perhaps even more difficult than that faced by its predecessors.

A traverse left *Mirny* on 26 December 1957 for *Komsomolskaya* and then across the Antarctic plateau, which the expeditioners named 'Plateau Sovetskoye' (Soviet Plateau),⁴²² towards the proposed new site for the intermediate station. *Sovetskaya* station was opened and manned on 16 February 1958 as a base from which to launch the assault on the Pole of Inaccessibility, but the approaching winter prevented any further progress. Only the following spring on 23 October 1958 did a traverse leave *Mirny* bound for the Pole of Inaccessibility, which it reached in less than two months. On 14 December 1958, in the last days of the IGY, a base for episodic research was finally established on Pole of Inaccessibility and was operational till the close of the year.

6.5 Conclusion

By establishing its network of inner continental stations: *Pionerskaya*, *Komsomolskaya*, *Vostok*, *Sovetskaya* and *Pole of Inaccessibility*, the Soviet Union had completely fulfilled its commitment to the International Geophysical Year of 1957 - 1958. The country welcomed the expeditioners back as heroes and the media

⁴²¹ Tryoshnikov, A. 1960. *Vtoraya kontinentalnaya ekspeditsia 1956-1958. Materialy nabludeniy [Second continental expedition. Observation material]*. Leningrad: Morskoi transport (Marine Transport Press): 180-181.

⁴²² Tolstikov, E. 1980. *Na polyusah Antarktidy [On the Poles of Antarctica]*. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 126.

extolled their exploits and perseverance, while it mourned the loss of mechanic/driver Ivan Hmara during the First SAE and hydrologist Nikolai Buromskiy and student of the Leningrad Military Engineering Maritime College during the Second SAE. Fortunately, there were no deaths recorded during the Third SAE.⁴²³

Soviet national prestige had been upheld and its science and technology had been globally showcased and recognized. The USSR had shown the world that it was seriously interested in the South Polar region and most definitely intended to participate in any international regime for the Antarctic. Whether this was a transient or long term interest will be investigated in the following chapter.

⁴²³ Based on Lukin, V.; N. Kornilov and N. Dmitriev. 2006. *Sovetskiye i Rossiyskiye Antarkticheskiye ekspeditsii v tsifrah i faktah (1955-2005)* [Soviet and Russian Antarctic expeditions – facts and figures (1955 – 2005)]. St Petersburg: AARI: 416.

'WILL THE RUSSIANS ABANDON MIRNY TO THE PENGUINS AFTER 1959... OR WILL THEY STAY?'⁴²⁴

When in 1948 the US attempted to exclude the USSR from participating in any future international regime for the Antarctic,⁴²⁵ the latter set in train a consistent and single-minded policy that would ensure that it had an influential voice in any such development. In 1950, the USSR had notified the US and the other countries with Antarctic interests of its intention to participate in any negotiations on any international regime.⁴²⁶ Soviet policy to achieve this aim was, in the main, implemented as a reaction to various initiatives of international scientific organisations involved in planning the International Geophysical Year (IGY). This chapter will identify major initiatives and show how Soviet support and expansion of these proposals, combined with an active encouragement of national Antarctic research, contributed to strengthening the USSR's position in Antarctic matters. This occurred much to the consternation of the Western nations with interests in the South Polar region. Australia, in particular, was concerned by the Soviet presence on the Australian Antarctic Territory (AAT)⁴²⁷ and was extremely interested in whether the USSR intended to stay for the long term. Although the Australians hoped otherwise, the evidence shows that this was indeed the case – from the day the Soviets set foot on the Antarctic continent, they had no intention of leaving.

After the USSR officially opened its first scientific observatory *Mirny* on the Antarctic continent on 13 February 1956 as the beginning of its contribution to the

⁴²⁴ This chapter is based on a paper which was published in *Polar Record* 45 (233): 167-175 (2009).

⁴²⁵ Gan, I. 2006 in press. The Soviet preparation for the IGY Antarctic program and the Australian response: politics and science. Santiago, Chile. Paper prepared for the second SCAR workshop on the history of Antarctic research entitled 'Multidimensional exploration of Antarctica around the 1950s', Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, Santiago, Chile, 21-22 September 2006.

⁴²⁶ USSR 1950. Soviet Memorandum of 7 June 1950 on the participation of the Soviet Union in any international settlement concerning Antarctica. In: Bush, W. 1982. *Antarctica and International Law. A Collection of inter-state and National Documents*, vol 3. London-Rome-New York: Ocean Publications Inc.: 208-209.

⁴²⁷ Gan, I. 2009. 'Will the Russians abandon Mirny to the penguins or... will they stay?' *Polar Record* 45 (233): 167-175.

IGY, a question arose that was to vex the Australian government (as well as the governments of other IGY participants) for the duration of that eighteen month long 'year' which was to end on 31 December 1958. It was most vividly posed in a newspaper article by David Burke entitled 'Red flag near South Pole.'⁴²⁸ The question was: 'Will the Russians abandon *Mirny* to the penguins after 1959... or will they stay'? The potential approaches for resolving conflicting Antarctic territorial claims of the claimant countries (such as Australia, which had a claim on that sector of Antarctica where the Soviets were planning to establish their bases) and non-claimants (such as the USA and the USSR) hinged on the answer to this question. If the Soviets stayed, their views on the future of the Antarctic would need to be considered. And the weight of these views would be considerable, given the size of their contribution to the international scientific endeavour, the location of their bases and their status as a world power.

7.1 Soviets and the IGY

The proposal for Soviet scientists to cooperate with the worldwide scientific community in investigating the Earth and atmosphere during the IGY involved the USSR in research activities in both the Arctic and Antarctic while its previous Arctic experience was significant, its experience in the South Polar region was limited to whaling operations which commenced in the Southern Ocean in the austral summer of 1946. The IGY proposal became the catalyst for expanding and intensifying Soviet interest in the Antarctic, and provided the USSR with the perfect opportunity to secure a major presence on the icy continent with their large scale scientific programme. Scientists from other countries conducting Antarctic research recognized the Soviet program as being 'most comprehensive' reported the Head of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition (ANARE), Philip Law.⁴²⁹ He noted that '[t]here seems little doubt that the Russian Antarctic expedition will make a major contribution to the scientific programme of the IGY' (Fig. 34).⁴³⁰

⁴²⁸ *The Sun Herald*, Sydney, 5 August 1956.

⁴²⁹ Law, P. 1956. Report on visit to USSR base Mirny. Kingston, Tasmania, Australia: Australian Antarctic Division Special Collection: 9.

⁴³⁰ Law, P. 1956. Report on visit to USSR base Mirny. Kingston, Tasmania, Australia: Australian Antarctic Division Special Collection: 7.



Fig. 34. Left to right: Somov and Law at *Mirny* on 30 or 31 January 1956. Photographer unknown (Australian Antarctic Division Multi-Media collection)

Law's assessment was confirmed by the Australian Antarctic explorer Sir Douglas Mawson who wrote that '[t]he contribution of Russia will be very significant.'⁴³¹ Dr Brian Roberts of the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, and part time civil servant of the British Foreign Office, believed that '[t]heir work is likely to lead to rapid and major increases in knowledge of the Antarctic.'⁴³² Even the Americans were worried that the US was 'very apt not only to be second to USSR, but a very poor second' in both polar regions.⁴³³ They later conceded that '[t]he overland transport of supplies to build [Soviet] inland bases ranks as one of the most substantial achievements of the IGY.'⁴³⁴

An indication of Soviet resolve to gain a foothold in the Antarctic was the solemnity of the symbolism when opening their first station. A box containing earth brought from Stalingrad was laid at the foundation of the flagpole where the Soviet flag was first hoisted above the icy continent (Fig. 35).

⁴³¹ Quoted in Suzyumov, E. 1968. *A life given to the Antarctic*. Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia: 57.

⁴³² Quoted in Bouchier, M.G.M. 1956. For the Secretary, Department of External Affairs. Soviet Antarctic Policy, 23 July 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4.

⁴³³ Crary to Odishaw quoted in Belanger, D. 2006. *Deep freeze. The United States, the International Geophysical Year, and the Origins of Antarctica's Age of Science*. Colorado: University Press of Colorado: 39.

⁴³⁴ Quoted in Klotz, F. 1990. *America on the Ice. Antarctic Policy issues*. Washington: National Defence University Press: 29.



Fig.35. The officer in charge of the first Soviet coastal base *Mirny* Hariton Greku places a box containing earth from Stalingrad at the foundation of the flagpole (personal collection of Leonid Dolgushin)

The Battle of Stalingrad (1942 - 1943) was still fresh in the minds of the expedition members, most of whom had fought in World War II (which lasted from 1941 to 1945 as far as the Soviet Union was concerned) as the decisive battle of the war on the eastern front. Now, the 'Red expedition' to the Antarctic was securing the beachhead in readiness for its 'assault on the sixth continent.'⁴³⁵ Leonid Dolgushin, a Russian glaciologist present at the flag-raising ceremony, saw the inclusion of Stalingrad earth in the flagstaff base as a 'symbol that the Soviet Union has come to Antarctica in earnest and for a very long time.'⁴³⁶

This resolve was driving the Soviet campaign to attain its objectives: to conquer the harshest climatic conditions and unforgiving terrain in their attempt to

⁴³⁵ Gusev, A. 1959. *Shturm shestogo kontinenta [Assault of the sixth continent]*. Moscow: Politizdat (Political Press); Solyanik, A. 1957. Poselok Mirny Tryoshnikovu. 27 Fevralia 1957 [To Tryoshnikov at Mirny, 27 February 1957]. St Petersburg: Tsentralniy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv nauchno-tekhnicheskoi dokumentatsii [Central State Archives of scientific and technical documentation], File 369, op1-1, d 1117.

⁴³⁶ Dolgushin, L. 2006. *Antarktida 1955-1957. Fotorasskaz o pervoi Sovetskoj ekspeditsii v Antarktidu i zimovke na pervoi vnutrikontinentalnoi stantsii 'Pionerskaya' [Antarctica 1955-1957. Photographic Account of the first Soviet expedition to Antarctica and wintering at the first inner continental station Pionerskaya]*. Moscow: Published by author: 44.

reach two of the most remote unexplored parts of the Antarctic continent, the South Geomagnetic Pole and the Pole of Inaccessibility. There could be no thought of failure; any setbacks were causes for great concern which led to a larger allocation of resources and a redoubling of effort. When the tractor sledge traverses which set out to establish the inner continental stations were faced with overwhelming difficulties in reaching the proposed sites, the Deputy Chief of the Glavsevmorput [Northern Sea Directorate] Evgeniy Tolstikov was determined that 'we cannot allow that our IGY program not be fulfilled' (Fig. 36).⁴³⁷



Fig. 36. Evgeniy Tolstikov (personal collection of Lev Savatyugin).

He proposed to assume leadership of the third composite Soviet Antarctic expedition (1957 - 1959) with the objective of handpicking his personnel who would undergo more rigorous health screening and to design and develop equipment more suited to Antarctic conditions.

Soviet policy certainly placed no obstacles in his way: on the contrary, the government was ready to provide all necessary resources for the success of its Antarctic endeavours, which was now a matter of national prestige. This was quite obvious to Dr. Roberts, who was sent on an exchange visit to Moscow and Leningrad with his colleague Dr. Armstrong in the first week of June in 1956. Roberts 'gained an impression of technical competence and scientific ability of a high order... and virtually no financial restrictions. Most of the equipment and instruments are excellent. On these aspects we have a much more significant "competitor" in the

⁴³⁷ Tolstikov, E. 1980. *Na polyusah Antarktidi [On the Poles of Antarctica]*. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 19

Antarctic than we expected.'⁴³⁸ One of the questions of more than passing interest to the Foreign Office was: how long did this 'significant competitor' intend to stay and 'compete' in the Antarctic? The answer to the question was of just as much interest to the Australians, who were hoping that the USSR would share their discoveries under the IGY and then 'quietly withdraw.'⁴³⁹

Dr. Roberts was given a hint of Soviet intentions in his conversation with the Chief of the Glavsevmorput and Deputy Minister of the Merchant Fleet Vasiliy Burhanov, who was also responsible for Antarctic matters (Fig. 37). Burhanov mentioned to Roberts that 'present Soviet plans for the Antarctic only extended to the end of the IGY, but they would like to extend all the IGY stations for an indefinite period after the IGY.'⁴⁴⁰



Fig. 37. Chief of Glavsevmorput Vasiliy Burhanov (seated far left) at a meeting of the Council for Antarctic Research (Archives of Film and Photo Documents, Krasnogorsk, Russia)

Although there were not yet any concrete Soviet plans for post IGY Antarctic activities, the desire for a permanent presence in the South Polar region had in no

⁴³⁸ Bouchier, M.G.M. 1956. For the Secretary, Department of External Affairs. Soviet Antarctic Policy, 23 July 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4.

⁴³⁹ *The Times*, London, 6 February 1957, quoted in Hanessian 1958. Antarctica: Current National interests and legal realities. *American Society of International law proceedings*, April: 153.

⁴⁴⁰ Quoted in Bouchier, M.G.M. 1956. For the Secretary, Department of External Affairs. Soviet Antarctic Policy, 23 July 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4.

way diminished. All that was required for the desire to become reality were the appropriate circumstances, which were not long in arriving on the scene.

7.2 Proposal to continue Antarctic research post IGY

In December 1956, the US National Committee for the IGY made a proposal to the Comité Spécial de l'Année Géophysique Internationale (CSAGI) to continue the IGY Antarctic program for another year. The proposal was approved at the Fourth CSAGI conference held in Paris on 13 - 15 June 1957. Professor Vladimir Belousov, the head of the Soviet delegation at the conference, stated that the Soviet IGY committee 'recognized the interest of the extension for one year of the geophysical observations in the Antarctic.' He expressed considerable interest in the formation of a special ICSU committee to look into post IGY Antarctic programs on an international scale (Fig.38).⁴⁴¹



Fig.38. President of the Geophysical and Geodesy Union, Vladimir Belousov (standing centre) at a press conference detailing the achievements of the IGY (Archives of Film and Photo Documents, Krasnogorsk, Russia)

The question was referred to the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) Executive Board which decided to create an *ad hoc* group that was to meet in Stockholm in September to consider the desirability of continuing scientific investigations of all kinds in the Antarctic which were inspired by, but not an

⁴⁴¹ Hanessian, J. 1958. Antarctica: Current National interests and legal realities. *American Society of International law, proceedings*, April: 157.

extension of, the IGY.⁴⁴² The Soviet representative to the *ad hoc* group was the former Head of the first composite Soviet Antarctic expedition (1955 - 1957) Mikhail Somov, who, after returning to Leningrad from the Paris meeting, was appointed to the newly created position of Deputy Director in charge of Antarctic Research at the USSR Arctic Research Institute (ARI) in July 1957. The creation of a new position dedicated to Antarctic research indicates that the proposal to continue scientific investigations was being taken seriously by the Soviet side. It was in his new role as Deputy Director in charge of Antarctic Research that Somov attended the meeting in Stockholm on 9 - 11 September 1957.

Delegates to the meeting were divided in their views regarding the desirability of continuing to coordinate Antarctic research in the post IGY period. Those 'in favor included the US, Chile, Argentina, and USSR, whereas the UK, France and Norway were opposed; likewise, letters from countries not sending representatives indicated that New Zealand is on the fence, South Africa favorable, Australia opposed, Belgium opposed.'⁴⁴³ The Australian opposition to the proposal was driven by the fear that a favourable response would give the Soviets an 'official' excuse to 'squat' on the AAT and 'that Australia's chances of getting the Russians to leave at the end of the IGY' would be negligible.⁴⁴⁴ The Australian government hoped that 'the governments of other ICSU countries, whose scientists favour an official extension of research, will refuse to make the necessary funds available for political reasons.'⁴⁴⁵

After the conclusion of the meeting, there was some conflict in interpreting Somov's statements regarding Soviet intentions in Antarctica after the IGY between the US representative Dr. Harry Wexler (Chief Scientist of the US IGY Antarctic Program) and the British representative, Sir David Brunt (Secretary of the Physical Section of the Royal Society of London). The former reported that Somov 'indicated on a map where the Soviet Antarctic stations were and where they wanted to go, said

⁴⁴² *SCAR Bulletin* No 1, January 1959: 360; Hanessian, J. 1958. Antarctica: Current National interests and legal realities. *American Society of International law, proceedings*, April: 149.

⁴⁴³ Quoted in Wilson, R. 1957. To Ambassador Dreier 20 September 1957. The ICSU Antarctic Conference Held at Saltsjoabaden, Sweden. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838/2 1495/1/9/4/ part 6.

⁴⁴⁴ *Sun*, Sydney, 14 November 1957, *Sunday Times*, Perth, WA.

⁴⁴⁵ *Sunday Times*, Perth, WA, 17 November 1957.

they expected to continue their studies in the Antarctic, and expressed the opinion that while Russia did not wish to influence other countries to go ahead if they didn't wish to do so, they felt in such case new nations should be invited in to carry on the studies.⁴⁴⁶ Brunt, however, had the impression that Somov was not keen to continue research in the Antarctic if only the two most interested countries, the US and USSR were to continue their programs with no other countries participating. The Americans felt that the elderly Brunt was somewhat disoriented and did not understand the gist of what was actually being said.⁴⁴⁷ It does indeed seem highly unlikely that the newly appointed Deputy Director in charge of Antarctic Research would have been opposed to continuing Soviet investigations in the Antarctic. According to the Australians, it was only natural that the Soviets would 'jump on the bandwagon'⁴⁴⁸ of the American proposal and consequently 'have the perfect excuse for staying on.'⁴⁴⁹

In fact, Somov managed to electrify the meeting 'by announcing [the] USSR intention to continue all six of their stations in Antarctica: *Mirny* (37 scientific personnel); *Oasis* (7) (including radiosounds observations); *Pionerskaya* (6); *Komsomolskaya* (4); *Vostok* (10); and *Sovetskaya*' built during the IGY.⁴⁵⁰ He explained that it would be 'uneconomical to go to the enormous expense and effort to establish inland stations and then keep them going for only one year.'⁴⁵¹ John Hanessian, the executive officer of the US IGY Committee responsible for the American scientific program in the Antarctic, quotes the ICSU - SCAR report that the USSR stated its intention to continue operations of all its stations, with further over-snow seismic traverses and additional oceanographic cruises in Antarctic waters.⁴⁵² Although opinion was divided, the group finally recommended that the

⁴⁴⁶ Hall, R. 1994. International regime formation and leadership. The origins of the Antarctic Treaty. Thesis Doctor of Philosophy, University of Tasmania: 113.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid, 113-114.

⁴⁴⁸ *Sunday Times*, Perth, WA, 17 November 1957.

⁴⁴⁹ *Sun*, Sydney, 14 November 1957.

⁴⁵⁰ Wilson, R. 1957. To Ambassador Dreier 20 September 1957. The ICSU Antarctic Conference Held at Saltsjoabaden, Sweden. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838/2 1495/1/9/4/ part 6.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Hanessian, J. 1958. Antarctica: Current National interests and legal realities. *American Society of International law, proceedings*, April: 157.

ICSU establish a committee to undertake the task of further international scientific activity in the Antarctic. This committee, the Special Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), was established by the ICSU Bureau at its meeting on 18 - 19 September 1957 when it invited the twelve nations actively engaged in Antarctic research to nominate a delegate to the Special Committee.⁴⁵³ Somov himself was also acutely aware of the political ramifications of the Stockholm conference for an international agreement on Antarctica. He felt the full weight of his own responsibility when he attended the first meeting of the SCAR held at The Hague on 3 - 5 February 1958. Somov considered this to be a 'crucial meeting' which would have long term international repercussions when it formulated its research objectives⁴⁵⁴ and prepared plans for the scientific exploration of Antarctica in the years following the IGY.⁴⁵⁵ As the sole Soviet delegate, Somov presented wide ranging Soviet ideas for future work in the Antarctic, which were received with much interest.⁴⁵⁶ He also suggested establishing seven additional coastal and five inland stations on the Antarctic continent, a proposal later adopted by one of the Conference's working groups.⁴⁵⁷ Following the meeting, he wrote in his report that the Soviet side had not realized the importance of the occasion and had sent him as the one and only delegate, which significantly reduced the effectiveness of the Soviet delegation. He was also frustrated by the fact that the interpreting support provided by the local embassy was totally inadequate and 'reduced [his input] to a minimum, detracting from the prestige and authority of the Soviet Union in resolving questions relating to Antarctic research which have not only scientific, but huge political implications.'⁴⁵⁸ His report produced the desired result and all future Soviet

⁴⁵³ *SCAR Bulletin* No 1, January 1959: 360; Hanessian, J. 1958. Antarctica: Current National interests and legal realities. *American Society of International law, proceedings*, April: 149.

⁴⁵⁴ Somov, M. 1958. Otchet ob uchastii v SCAR v Gaage 03-05 Fevralia 1958 [Report of participation at SCAR in The Hague 03-05 Feb 1958]. St Petersburg: Tsentralniy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv nauchno-tehnicheskoy dokumentatsii [Central State Archives of scientific and technical documentation], File 369, op1 - 3, d 5: 4.

⁴⁵⁵ *SCAR Bulletin* No 1, January 1959: 361.

⁴⁵⁶ Hanessian, J. 1958. Antarctica: Current National interests and legal realities. *American Society of International law, proceedings*, April: 151.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 157-158.

⁴⁵⁸ Somov, M. 1958. Otchet ob uchastii v SCAR v Gaage 03-05 Fevralia 1958 [Report of participation at SCAR in The Hague 03-05 Feb 1958]. St Petersburg: Tsentralniy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv nauchno-tehnicheskoy dokumentatsii [Central State Archives of scientific and technical documentation], File 369, op1 - 3, d 5: 4.

delegations to the SCAR consisted of at least two scientists, one of whom had knowledge of the appropriate language.

7.3 Soviet reactions to the proposal

Following the SCAR meeting at The Hague, the Academic Council of the ARI convened on 24 May 1958 to discuss the preliminary results of the second continental Soviet Antarctic expedition, the hydrographic and cartographic work of the third Marine Antarctic expedition and plans for the fourth Soviet Antarctic expedition. Particular mention was made of the widening international scientific research in the Antarctic agreed to at The Hague conference and the widening role of Soviet science in the region. The Academic Council considered it necessary to investigate the little known geography of areas adjacent to the Bellingshausen and Amundsen Seas and suggested building a small permanent coastal observatory in that vicinity. This was all the more important since these areas were 'first discovered by the Russians'. The Council noted that there was 'insufficient geological and glaciological research undertaken by the Soviet scientists' and proposed a transcontinental seismoglaciologic traverse from *Mirny – Pionerskaya – Vostok* – South Geographic Pole and then on to the new station on the Bellingshausen Sea, as well as a general geological investigation of Dronnings Maud Land and the Bellingshausen Sea coast.⁴⁵⁹ There seemed to be a great emphasis placed on research in the shelf, shoal and ice covered waters of the Bellingshausen Sea, to which the Marine expedition was to pay special attention.⁴⁶⁰ Once again, the plans were on a grand scale, and it seems likely that the attempt to establish a base on the coast adjoining the Bellingshausen Sea and the investigations of the sea itself had more than scientific value: occupation of the Antarctic continent in an area 'first discovered by Russians'⁴⁶¹ and hitherto unclaimed by any other country would have a distinct advantage for any potential future Soviet claim.

⁴⁵⁹ Gordienko, P. and A. Burdikina 1958. *Vipiska iz protokola no 10 zasedaniaya uchenogo Soveta Arkticheskogo insituta ot 24 Maya 1958* [Excerpt from protocol no 10 of the Academic Council of the Arctic Institute, 24 May 1958]. Moscow, Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives], File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595: 2.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid: 5.

⁴⁶¹ Gordienko, P. and A. Burdikina 1958. *Vipiska iz protokola no 10 zasedaniaya uchenogo Soveta Arkticheskogo instituta ot 24 Maya 1958* [Excerpt from protocol no 10 of the Academic Council of the Arctic Institute, 24 May 1958]. Moscow, Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives], File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595: 2.

Political factors were also a consideration in the question of processing the accumulated data collected by the Soviet expeditions. The Academic Council recommended that the ARI and the expedition take positive steps to expedite the publication of preliminary reports of the expedition members.⁴⁶² The Acting Director of the ARI, Pavel Gordienko (1913 - 1982) (Fig. 39), and the secretary of the Institute's Communist Party organization, L. Balakshin, wrote to the Deputy Minister of the Merchant Fleet, Aleksandr Afanasiev, that the situation regarding data processing was critical and required a government decision. Afanasiev granted his approval for the Director of the ARI, Vyacheslav Frolov, to edit and publish a journal entitled the *Information Bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic Expedition*,⁴⁶³ the first issue of which came out in August of that year and which continued to be published until 1999.



Fig. 39. Pavel Gordienko. Portrait by S. Gesin (hanging at AARI)

Gordienko and Balakshin further argued that the USSR Council of Ministers' draft resolution on the Antarctic that included the intention to create an Antarctic Institute independent of the Arctic Institute was 'untimely and economically

⁴⁶² Ibid: 6.

⁴⁶³ Afanasiev, A. 1958. Direktor Arkhticheskogo Instituta V. Frolovu, 24 Maya 1958 [To the Director of the Arctic Institute V. Frolov, 24 May 1958]. Moscow, Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archive], File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

unwarranted', with the Leningrad City Executive Committee being 'categorically against' locating an institute in Leningrad. '[O]nly specific political considerations could contribute to a positive decision regarding such an Institute.'⁴⁶⁴ Instead, they suggested setting up a large division capable of supporting all the goals of the Soviet Antarctic expedition. This would be either a branch or department of the ARI dedicated exclusively to Antarctic research and headed by the leaders of the composite Soviet Antarctic expedition. The Academic Council of the ARI met on 12 June 1958 and resolved that due to the fact that the Antarctic had become an essential component of the research interest of the ARI, its name would be changed to the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute.⁴⁶⁵ The resolution to formally incorporate Antarctic research into permanent mainstream Soviet academe was ratified by a decree of the Council of Ministers on 25 June 1958⁴⁶⁶ and demonstrated that Antarctic research was to continue on a long term basis.

A further major opportunity for the USSR to provide input for future Antarctic plans presented itself at the Fifth General Assembly of CSAGI held in Moscow 30 July - 9 August 1958 and at the second SCAR meeting (4 - 11 August 1958) which was held in conjunction with the CSAGI Assembly at the same venue. One of the four principal matters to be taken up by the CSAGI Assembly was the question of future international cooperation in geophysics at the end of the IGY. The Soviet delegation, supported by Communist China, Poland and East Germany proposed that the IGY be extended for another year to complete IGY tasks that were not completed by the end of 1958, especially in the study of Antarctica. It also proposed to extend cooperation to allow time to organize a permanent arrangement

⁴⁶⁴ Gordienko, P. and A. Balakshin 1958. Zamestitelu Ministra Morskogo Flota Nachalniku Glavsevmorputi A. Afanasievu, 21 Aprelya 1958 [To the Deputy Minister of the Merchant Fleet and Director of Glavsevmorput A. Afanasiev, 21 Apr 1958]. Moscow, Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives], File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

⁴⁶⁵ Frolov, V. 1958. Vipiska iz protokola No 12 zasedaniya uchenogo Soveta Arkticheskogo nauchno-issledovatel'skogo instituta Glavsevmorputi, 12 Iyunya 1958 [Excerpt from protocol No 12 of the Academic Council of the Arctic Research Institute, 12 June 1958]. Moscow, Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives], File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

⁴⁶⁶ AANII 1958. Dela postoyannogo hraneniya nauchno-issledovatel'skoi dokumentatsii za 1919-1965 [Arctic and Antarctic research Institute. 1958. Permanent files of scientific research documentation 1919-1965]. St Petersburg: Tsentralniy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv nauchno-tehnicheskoy dokumentatsii [Central State Archives of scientific and technical documentation], File 369, op 2-1, p 11.

for such cooperation.⁴⁶⁷ The Soviet proposal was optimistically positive in its assessment of the IGY, stressing that '[t]he IGY became a symbol of wide international co-operation based on mutual benefit. New forms of co-operation are being built on the foundation of World Data Centres, World Days Centres, etc'. The USSR was eager to continue the momentum of international collaboration and called on the countries involved 'to expand the success of international scientific co-operation' and continue the IGY activities for one year till 31 December 1959.⁴⁶⁸ This proposal was referred to the Advisory Council for the IGY which recommended that the IGY should be succeeded by a program of International Geophysical Co-operation 1959 where all nations willing and able to continue their research would participate. The ICSU meeting in Washington in October 1958 endorsed this proposal.⁴⁶⁹

It is noteworthy that H. Newell from the US Naval Research Laboratory in Washington DC, who was substituting for Lloyd Berkner in the coordinating role of CSAGI Reporter for Rockets and Satellites at the Moscow assembly, reported that '[f]rom their position on this question... it appeared that the Soviet scientists need the IGY name and organization to help them maintain their position at home and their outside contacts and the freedom of intercourse that has been achieved so far. Apparently this need is a very urgent and demanding one in the opinion of the Soviet geophysicists and solar physicists.'⁴⁷⁰

Newell's views are borne out by the fact that Somov and Burhanov were keen to expand ties with other countries by inviting their scientists to participate in the Soviet program. They had, by this time, experienced the beneficial effects of having the American exchange meteorologists Gordon Cartwright participate in the second

⁴⁶⁷ Sullivan, W. 1961. *Assault on the unknown. The International Geophysical Year*. London: McGraw-Hill Book Company: 408-409.

⁴⁶⁸ Fifth Meeting of CSAGI 1958. Annex 3. On the Prolongation of the IGY. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia P1469/0, 119/6 part 2.

⁴⁶⁹ Chapman, S. 1959. *IGY: Year of Discovery. The story of the IGY*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press: 108-109.

⁴⁷⁰ Quoted in Sullivan, W. 1961. *Assault on the unknown. The International Geophysical Year*. London: McGraw-Hill Book Company: 409; Newell 1959. IGY conference in Moscow. *Science* 129 (January): 80.

composite SAE⁴⁷¹ and Morton Rubin in the third expedition,⁴⁷² wintering at *Mirny* during the IGY. In Moscow at the SCAR meeting, the Soviets invited the Danish delegate to send a scientist on the next SAE after the IGY.⁴⁷³ At their urging, Afanasiev prepared a draft resolution to include both a Polish and a Danish scientist in the coming Soviet Antarctic expedition, which he sent off for approval to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). However, the Central Committee was not quite as keen as Afanasiev, Somov and Burhanov to encourage fraternisation with Western scientists, and suggested that they find ways to 'tactfully deny permission' to the Danish scientist, but it was happy to approve the Eastern bloc representative from Poland.⁴⁷⁴ For the Australians, who continued to be wary of Soviet plans in the Antarctic, 'the introduction of additional bloc scientists into Antarctic research is noteworthy, in view of persistent Soviet desires to broaden accession to the A[ntarctic] T[reaty] to be negotiated in October 1959.'⁴⁷⁵

The wariness of the Australian government was not allayed by the decision to continue international geophysical co-operation in 1959. It was placed in a situation whereby the USSR was 'presented with an "official" excuse to remain' in the AAT.⁴⁷⁶ The Australian government had previously 'welcomed' the Soviet scientists onto the territory it claimed on the Antarctic continent for the period of the IGY, even though the Soviets refused to acknowledge any claims.⁴⁷⁷ It had hoped that the Soviet scientists would leave at the conclusion of the IGY, but now felt the need to once again attempt to gain recognition of its claim by 'conveying to the government

⁴⁷¹ Cartwright, G. 1958. I lived with the Russians in Antarctica. *The Saturday Evening Post*, 1958, 18 October, p. 23-25, 80, 83, 88, 90; Cartwright & Rubin 1961. Inside Antarctica No 6 – Meteorology at Mirny. *Weatherwise* 1961, June, p. 110-118.

⁴⁷² Rubin, H. 2004. *A weather man for all seasons. The life of Morton J. Rubin*. Hinesville, GA.

⁴⁷³ Herlofson 1958. Letter to M. Somov, 2 September 1958. Moscow, Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives] RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2594.

⁴⁷⁴ Afanasiev, A. 1958. V ZK KPSS, 11 Oktyabrya 1958 [To the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, 11 October 1958]. Moscow, Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives] RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2594.

⁴⁷⁵ Miller E. A. 1959. Letter to Law. 10 August 1959. Canberra, Australia; National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/13/1 part 3.

⁴⁷⁶ *Sunday Times*, Perth, WA, 17 November 1957.

⁴⁷⁷ Gan, I. 2009. The reluctant hosts: Soviet Antarctic expedition ships visit Australia and New Zealand in 1956. *Polar Record* 45 (232): 37-50.

of the USSR their approval for the continuance of scientific research by Soviet scientists in the AAT.⁴⁷⁸ By agreeing to these activities, the Australian government wished to make it clear that it reserved its position in relation to the AAT. This Australian 'approval' was certainly not in answer to any Soviet request for permission, since the USSR was insistent that it recognized no claims. The Soviet lawyer Movchan relates Khrushchev's reply to Melbourne's *The Herald* newspaper correspondent of 23 June 1958, who asked the Soviet leader to comment on the alarm about Australian sovereignty caused by the Soviet request 'to prolong the Russian scientists' stay in the Antarctic'. Khrushchev told the journalist that his question 'seems to be based on a misunderstanding. We have not made any such request to anyone': the USSR had never requested Australian permission to conduct research in the Antarctic. He explained that the continuing Soviet presence on the icy continent was decided 'at the meeting of the special committee on Antarctic investigations under the International Council of Scientific Unions, held at The Hague in February this year' and not on the permission of a claimant whose claims were not recognized by either the USSR or the USA. Moreover, he reiterated the Soviet position that 'according to international practice, all interested countries should take part in discussing the question of jurisdiction over any area of international importance. The Soviet government considers that this international practice should be followed in deciding the question of jurisdiction over the Antarctic.'⁴⁷⁹

Meanwhile, at the SCAR meeting in Moscow (4 - 11 August 1958), the USSR reported that it was in the process of forming a new National Antarctic Committee, since Australia, Belgium, France, Japan, New Zealand and South Africa had already formed their own. The USA already had a Polar Committee that would

⁴⁷⁸ Brady, G. 1959. To the Secretary, Department of External Affairs. 13 May 1959. Antarctica - Notes to Polish and Soviet Governments (Transfer of Soviet Station at Bunger's Oasis). A note of the British Embassy, Moscow, of 4 May 1959 attached. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia: A1838, 1495/13/1 part 3.

⁴⁷⁹ Movchan, A. 1959. Pravovoi status Antarktiki - mezhdunarodnaya problema [The legal status of Antarctica - an international problem]. In: *Sovetskiy ezhegodnik mezhdunarodnogo prava 1959* [Soviet yearbook of international law 1959]. Moscow: AN SSSR (USSR Academy of Sciences Press): 350-351; Department of External affairs 1958. DEA Outward Cablegram to Australian Embassy, Washington; Australian High Commission, London; Australian High Commission, Wellington; Australian Embassy, Tokyo; Australian Attaché, Cape Town; Australian High Commission, Ottawa; Australian Legation, Rio De Janeiro; Australian High Commission, New Delhi. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/13/1 part 2.

act as a National Antarctic Committee for the purposes of SCAR. The USSR intended to continue work at existing bases but reduce work at *Oasis* and close *Pionerskaya*, [which was in fact closed on 17 November 1958 and transferred to the Polish Academy of Science on 23 January 1959 who renamed it *Dobrovolski* in honour of the Polish geophysicist and Antarctic explorer⁴⁸⁰ and move *Sovetskaya* to the Pole of Inaccessibility in October or November 1958. A traverse from *Vostok* to the South Pole and back to *Sovetskaya* was also planned, as well as establishing small bases south of the Bellingshausen Sea and Dronning Maud Land which would assist the transcontinental traverse planned for the future.⁴⁸¹ The Soviet intention to set up a small base on the Bellingshausen coast in the unclaimed sector of Antarctica raised questions as to whether motivations of a political nature lay behind their intention. The Australians in particular were unsure of Soviet intentions: they recognized that they 'may indicate a Soviet desire to establish some connection between present Soviet scientific work in the Antarctic and the explorations of Bellingshausen early in the 19th century, with a view to an eventual Soviet claim to territory in the sector.'⁴⁸² Overall, however, the Australians now acknowledged that it was important 'to ensure the continuation of the co-ordination of international scientific programmes in Antarctica which had proved so effective during the IGY and to foster the admirable spirit of international friendship and co-operation which had grown up. The establishment of SCAR placed Antarctic research on a firm long-term footing for the first time in Polar history.'⁴⁸³

Among other investigations proposed by the USSR at the SCAR meeting was a comprehensive, coordinated mapping program with various nations co-operating to produce a map of Antarctica on a scale of 1:3,000,000⁴⁸⁴ with the aid of aero

⁴⁸⁰ Lukin, V., N. Kornilov, and N. Dmitriev 2006. *Sovetskie i Rossiiskie Antarkticheskie ekspeditsii v tsifrah i faktah (1955-2005)* [Soviet and Russian Antarctic expeditions – facts and figures [1995 – 2005]. St Petersburg: AANII: 435; Machowski 1977. *The status of Antarctica in the light of International law*. Translated from Polish by Z. Zienkiewicz. Springfield, VA: National Technical Information Service: 132 – 133.

⁴⁸¹ *SCAR Bulletin* 1959, No 1 January 1959: 363 – 364.

⁴⁸² Department of External Affairs 1959. Antarctica: Soviet 1959/60 expedition 1959. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia: A1838, 1495/13/1 part 3.

⁴⁸³ Gunson, N. 1963. Australian Antarctic Territory. In Greenwood, G. and N. Harper. *Australia in world affairs 1956-1960*. Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire: 396.

⁴⁸⁴ *SCAR Bulletin* 1959, 1 (January): 365.

photography. Australia revealed its insecurity with regard to the Soviet proposal by attempting to stall this initiative, which would allow the Soviets to utilize their superior logistic capabilities to map the AAT on which they had built their bases. The AAT had not yet been extensively mapped by the Australians themselves, and their claim to the territory may have been significantly weakened if the Soviets were the ones responsible for producing a map of the area claimed by Australia. K. Bullen, the Australian delegate, declared that he was unable to discuss the matter without his government's approval. The majority of the other delegates, however, agreed to the proposal,⁴⁸⁵ and Australia had no alternative but to accept the formation of a cartography working group under the chairmanship of Georges Laclavère. Australia not only resigned itself to the Soviet proposal, but played host to the Third SCAR meeting in Canberra on 2 - 6 March 1959, where the Soviet delegate Somov and his adviser Boris Dzerdzeyevsky gave impetus to the proposal by asking that preparation of the 1:3,000,000 map of Antarctica be begun without delay.⁴⁸⁶ Ironically, the Australian Director of National Mapping, Bruce Lambert, was appointed to the new post of Permanent Secretary of the Working Group on Cartography.⁴⁸⁷

7. 4 Conclusion

The eagerness with which the USSR embraced US and other initiatives in international scientific collaboration and introduced its own grand proposals was a consistent policy followed by the USSR as a consequence of its determination to solve the political question of its participation in any international regime for the Antarctic. The goodwill engendered by such international collaboration had provided the USSR with a mechanism for continuing to engage in high quality research in the Antarctic, and the means by which to extend and maintain a significant presence in

⁴⁸⁵ Burhanov, V. 1958. Doklad ot 14 Avgusta 1958 ob uchastii Sovetskoi delegatsii v rabote Spetsialnogo Komiteta po Antarkticheskim issledovaniyam s 4 po 11 Avgusta 1958 v Moskve [Report of 14 August 1958 about the participation of the Soviet delegation in the deliberations of SCAR in Moscow 4-11 August 1958]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives] RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed 2594.

⁴⁸⁶ SCAR Bulletin 1959, 3 (September): 593; Somov, M. 1959 Tretiya sessiya spetsialnogo komiteta po Antarkticheskim issledovaniyam v Kanberre 2-6 Marta 1959 [Third session of SCAR in Canberra 2-6 March 1959]. *Informatsionniy Buleten Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi Expeditsii* [Information bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic expedition] 1959, No 8. : 32.

⁴⁸⁷ Gunson, N. 1963. Australian Antarctic Territory. In Greenwood, G. and N. Harper. *Australia in world affairs 1956-1960*. Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire: 397.

the region. This meant that it had become impossible to exclude the USSR from any scientific, and ultimately from any political, discussions about the future of the Antarctic as the US had attempted to do with its 1948 proposal for an internationalization of Antarctica.⁴⁸⁸ As regards the scientific discussions, enthusiastic Soviet support of the short term CSAGI and the long term SCAR had given the USSR a substantial voice in formulating research programs in the Antarctic. Although the SCAR was merely a scientific body that wielded no executive power, it became the instrument which could 'ensure the continuation of the co-ordination of international scientific programs in Antarctica which had proved so effective during the IGY.'⁴⁸⁹ The creation of such an instrument had repercussions which extended much wider than the world's scientific community; Gunson contends that 'the fact that world scientists consider the Antarctic such an important field for scientific research has had a powerful influence on political thinking.'⁴⁹⁰ Thus, the ICSU decision to create the SCAR was pivotal in accelerating and focussing the political processes that would lead to an international agreement on the Antarctic. Hall considers that the Soviet announcement in Stockholm regarding the USSR's continuing presence in the Antarctic was 'a crucial turning point on the path toward a conference on Antarctica and, ultimately, an Antarctic agreement.'⁴⁹¹ His view is confirmed by Soviet international law expert Vladimir Golitsyn, who writes more generally that the international cooperation achieved during the IGY had laid the groundwork for both the creation of the SCAR and indeed of a future agreement on the Antarctic.⁴⁹²

And of course the answer to the rhetorical question of whether the Soviets would 'abandon *Mirny* to the penguins after 1959... or will they stay?' was becoming

⁴⁸⁸ Hall, R. 1994. International regime formation and leadership. The origins of the Antarctic Treaty. Thesis. Doctor of Philosophy, University of Tasmania: 81 – 82.

⁴⁸⁹ Burhanov, V. 1958. Doklad ot 14 Avgusta 1958 ob uchastii Sovetskoi delegatsii v rabote Spetsialnogo Komiteta po Antarkticheskim issledovaniyam s 4 po 11 Avgusta 1958 v Moskve [Report of 14 August 1958 about the participation of the Soviet delegation in the deliberations of SCAR in Moscow 4-11 August 1958]. Moscow, Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvennyi Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives] RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed 2594.

⁴⁹⁰ Gunson, N. 1963. Australian Antarctic Territory. In Greenwood, G. and N. Harper. *Australia in world affairs 1956-1960*. Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire: 396.

⁴⁹¹ Hall, R. 1994. International Regime Formation and Leadership: The Origins of the Antarctic Treaty. Thesis, Doctor of Philosophy. Hobart, University of Tasmania: 154.

⁴⁹² Golitsyn, V. 1983. *Antarktika: mezhdunarodno-pravovoi rezhim* [Antarctica: international legal regime]. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnie otnosheniya (International relations Press): 37.

more and more obvious. The stake that the Soviets had placed on science to achieve their Antarctic political interests was paying dividends, and they believed that they should continue to play their winning card. While relaxing in Sydney after the conclusion of the Third SCAR meeting in Canberra, the Soviet delegate Dzerdzeyevskiy, was able to finally show his hand to the journalist who had originally posed the question: '[a]s long as there is need for scientific investigation, the Soviet expedition will be in Antarctica.'⁴⁹³

The following chapter explores the thinking of both political and scientific figures in the USSR that helped shape Soviet scientific investigation of the Antarctic after the IGY. The political perspective is exemplified by the deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Aleksei Kosygin, and the scientific perspective by the deputy director of the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute Mikhail Somov. The fact that there was interplay between both viewpoints when planning the Soviet post IGY Antarctic programs shows that political considerations did not always prevail over the scientific, with national prestige being an area where their interests overlapped.

⁴⁹³ *Sun Herald*, Sydney, 15 March 1959.

SOVIET ANTARCTIC PLANS AFTER THE IGY: CHANGES IN POLICY⁴⁹⁴

The distinguished American academic Christopher Joyner concluded in 1991 that '[t]he Soviet Union's polar policies are products of its national interests. As such, they mirror the Soviet government's foreign policy objectives and international priorities'.⁴⁹⁵

Soviet foreign policy objectives in regard to the North Polar region were most forcefully set out in a report in 1945 by the first deputy director of the Arctic Research Institute (ARI) Igor Maksimov (1910 - 1977) (Fig. 40.



(http://www.aari.aq/default_en.html)) to the deputy chief and head of the political department of the Glavsevmorput [Northern Sea Directorate] Valerian Novikov, where Maksimov stresses the importance of preserving the priority of Soviet research and exploration in the North Polar region. He saw this priority as being under threat from 'powerful and active competitors' in Northern America who were displaying a 'rapidly growing interest' in the Arctic.⁴⁹⁶ During the mid 1940s these competitors, specifically, the

⁴⁹⁴ This chapter is based on a paper which is in Press in *Polar Record*, doi: 10.1017/S0032247.409008456.

⁴⁹⁵ Joyner, C. 1991. A comparison of Soviet Arctic and Antarctic politics. In: Brigham, L. (Ed.). *The Soviet Maritime Arctic*. London: Belhaven Press: 298.

⁴⁹⁶ Maksimov, I. 1945. Dokladnaya zapiska zamestitelyu nachalnika Glavsevmorputi pri SNK SSSR V. Novikovu, Sentyabr 1945 [Report to the Deputy Director of Glavsevmorput at the Council of the People's Commissars, V. Novikov, September 1945]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv sotsialno politicheskoi istorii [Russian State Archives for Social and Political History], File 475, op 1, d 43: 196.

US and Canada, were already in the process of organizing the Arctic Institute of North America, which was to be based in Montreal, Canada.⁴⁹⁷

While concentrating attention on practical aspects of Arctic research, especially on increasing the possibility of sea and air transport, the director of the ARI Viktor Buinitskiy (1911 - 1980) (Fig. 41 (http://www.aari.aq/default_en.html)) recognized that a wider study of both Polar regions would lead to a greater



understanding of the earth's atmospheric processes. To this end, at a meeting at the ARI in November 1945 dedicated to the 25th jubilee of its foundation, he proposed that 'Soviet scientists embark on systematic research in the Antarctic by establishing a permanent geophysical observatory, particularly in the area of the South Pole.'⁴⁹⁸ At the time, Buinitskiy's bold proposal fell on barren ground, since the USSR's polar policy was much more focussed on expanding the economic potential of the Soviet Arctic; it had not yet given serious consideration to the South Polar region, although the commencement

of operations of the Soviet *Slava* whaling flotilla in the Southern Ocean in 1946 demonstrated that the possibility of obtaining economic benefits from that far flung part of the globe was certainly recognized. This chapter will examine the Soviet Antarctic policy which was being shaped in the concluding months of the IGY, when intersecting proposals for continuing international scientific cooperation and an international political regime for the Antarctic were being debated. Soviet government policy as outlined by the deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Aleksei Kosygin, and the aims of Soviet Antarctic scientists as

⁴⁹⁷ McDonald, R. 2005. Challenges and accomplishments: a celebration of the Arctic Institute of North America. *Arctic* 59 (4): 440.

⁴⁹⁸ Buinitskiy, V. 1945. *Osnovniye itogi i perspektivi nauchno-issledovatel'skikh rabot Arkticheskogo instituta* [Main results and opportunities for scientific research of the Arctic institute]. Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Glavzevmorputi (Glavsevmorput Press): 13.

envisaged by the deputy director of the by now renamed Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute (AARI) Mikhail Somov did not always coincide. This chapter illustrates the different political and scientific perspectives and demonstrates that post IGY Antarctic policy was ultimately shaped by a compromise between the two viewpoints.

S. Wolk, writing in the *Bulletin of the Institute for the study of the Soviet Union* in 1958, argues that the commencement of operations of the *Slava* flotilla was in fact 'the first practical Soviet step towards getting a foothold in the Antarctic after the ratification on 20 November 1946 of a new international convention on whaling'.⁴⁹⁹ By 1958, the flotilla consisted of fifteen vessels: ten whale hunting vessels, four to tow the carcasses and one, the *Gorbach* (Russian: humpback whale) fitted out for conducting biological, oceanographic and meteorological research.⁵⁰⁰ 'A group of scientists from the All-Union Research Institute of Marine Fishery and Oceanography (VNIRO) has accompanied [the flotilla], studying, in addition to problems peculiar to the whaling industry, the natural features and climate of the Antarctic.'⁵⁰¹ Although scientific research was already being carried out on the whaling flotilla in the Southern Ocean, according to the perverse Stalinist logic of the time, Buinitskiy's 'fantastic plans of an expedition ... to the Antarctic' to conduct research and establish an observatory were alleged to be an avenue for his own self-aggrandizement.⁵⁰² After the end of World War II when relations between the USSR and the West rapidly deteriorated, Stalin made a decision to abolish all interactions of Soviet citizens with countries outside the Eastern bloc.⁵⁰³ The Ministry of State Control was instructed to ensure that all government institutions complied with the

⁴⁹⁹ Wolk, S. 1958. The basis of Soviet claims in the Antarctic. *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the USSR* 5: 44.

⁵⁰⁰ Tryoshnikov, A. 1963. *Istoriya otkritiya i issledovaniya Antarktidi* [History of the discovery and investigation of Antarctica]. Moscow: Geografizdat (Geographical Literature Press): 394.

⁵⁰¹ Wolk, S. 1958. The basis of Soviet claims in the Antarctic. *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the USSR* 5: 44.

⁵⁰² Timofeev, 1947. Doklad o reshenii kollegii Glavsevmorputi ot 26.09 [1947] o vipolnenii postanovleniya partsobraniya Arkticheskogo institute ot 1.08.1947 po delu professorov Kluevoi i Roskina [Report of the Glavsevmorput board decision regarding the implementation of the party meeting resolution of 1.08.1947 concerning the case of professors Klyueva and Roskin]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv sotsialno politicheskoi istorii [Russian State Archives for Social and Political History], File 475, op 1, d 43: 17.

⁵⁰³ See Pollock, E. 2006. Stalin and the Soviet science wars. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 269 p.

new edict, to which end in September 1947 the Ministry conducted an audit of the ARI in Leningrad. According to the auditors, Buinitskiy and other ARI staff had divulged scientific data 'which were considered to be state secrets' and had corresponded and exchanged publications with western colleagues. Based on these revelations, the USSR Council of Ministers ordered that Buinitskiy stand trial in a Communist Party 'court of honour' to answer the charges against him.⁵⁰⁴ Predictably, the court found Buinitskiy guilty as charged and relieved him of his position as director of the ARI. As a final humiliation, his manuscripts were burned.⁵⁰⁵ However, his ideas for Antarctic research were conveniently remembered by Professor Vladimir Vize (1886 - 1954) (Fig. 42) on 10 February 1949 at a meeting of the USSR All - Union Geographical Society.



Fig. 42. Vladimir Vize (http://www.aari.aq/default_en.html)

Buinitskiy's proposal for an observatory on the icy continent was brought up as evidence of the USSR's ongoing interest in the region during the Society's

⁵⁰⁴ Timofeev 1947. Doklad o reshenii kollegii Glavsevmorputi ot 26.09 [1947] o vipolnenii postanovleniya partsobraniya Arkticheskogo institute ot 1.08.1947 po delu professorov Kluevoi i Roskina [Report of the Glavsevmorput board decision regarding the implementation of the party meeting resolution of 1.08.1947 concerning the case of professors Klyueva and Roskin]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv sotsialno politicheskoi istorii [Russian State Archives for Social and Political History], File 475, op 1, d 43: 14 – 15.

⁵⁰⁵ Boiko, L. 2007. Ot vseya Rossii blagodarnost i vechnaya v svete slava [From the whole of Russia: gratitude and eternal glory]. Unpublished manuscript (copy in possession of author).

deliberations about the US proposal for an international regime for the Antarctic which attempted to exclude the participation of the USSR.⁵⁰⁶

The US attempt to exclude the USSR was the catalyst that drove the Soviet government into giving serious consideration to its foreign policy objectives in regard to the South Polar region.⁵⁰⁷ First and foremost, these objectives were directed at gaining a voice in the formation of any proposed international regime, and in the initial stages, Soviet scientists were at the forefront of formulating and directing this policy.⁵⁰⁸ The meeting of the USSR All - Union Geographical Society on 10 February 1949 helped develop the argument for the priority of Russian discoveries in the Antarctic and attempted to demonstrate the continuity of that interest from the time of Bellingshausen's expedition in 1819 - 1821. The resolutions adopted by the meeting were mirrored in the note of the Soviet government of 7 June 1950 to the Argentine, Australian, British, French, New Zealand, Norwegian and the US governments, which insisted on the right of the USSR to participate in the discussion and solution of all problems relating to the Antarctic.⁵⁰⁹ Later, during preparations for the IGY, the USSR Academy of Sciences and many other scientific research institutions were recruited to help draw up and contribute to the national Antarctic research program. Toward the latter part of the IGY, however, the parlous state of the Soviet living standards and economy was such that the government felt it necessary to undertake a reassessment of its whole national economic and agricultural policy by calling for an extraordinary Congress of the CPSU, which was

⁵⁰⁶ Berg, L. 1949. Russkiye otkritiya v Antarktike i sovremenniiy interes k nei [Russian discoveries in the Antarctic and present-day interests]. *Izvestiya Vsesoyuznogo geograficheskogo obshchestva (Report of the All Union Geographical Society)* 2: 145.

⁵⁰⁷ For how this affected Soviet scientists and Stalin's influence on post war Soviet science, see Pollock, E. 2006. *Stalin and the Soviet science wars*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 269 p.

⁵⁰⁸ Gan, I. in Press. The Soviet preparation for the IGY Antarctic program and the Australian response: politics and science. Santiago, Chile. Paper prepared for the second SCAR workshop on the history of Antarctic research entitled 'Multidimensional exploration of Antarctica around the 1950s', Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile, Santiago, Chile, 21-22 September 2006; Gan 2009. 'Will the Russians abandon *Mirny* to the penguins after 1959... or will they stay?' *Polar Record* 45 (233): 167-175.

⁵⁰⁹ USSR 1949. Resolution of 10 February 1949 concerning Antarctica adopted by the All-Union Geographical Society. In: Bush, W. 1982. *Antarctica and International Law. A Collection of inter-state and National Documents*, vol 3. London-Rome-New York: Ocean Publications Inc.: 207-208; USSR 1950. Soviet Memorandum of 7 June 1950 on the participation of the Soviet Union in any international settlement concerning Antarctica. In: Bush, W. 1982. *Antarctica and International Law. A Collection of inter-state and National Documents*, vol 3. London-Rome-New York: Ocean Publications Inc.: 208-209; Wolk, S. 1958. The basis of Soviet claims in the Antarctic. *Bulletin of the Institute of the Study of the USSR* 5: 45.

to take place from 27 January to 5 February 1959. Antarctic policy, though not high on the list of priorities, was one of the questions addressed during preparations for the Congress. As one time Professor of Political Science at Kent State University Boleslaw Boczek pointed out, 'at the political level, Soviet Antarctic activities are coordinated and supervised by superior government and party organs'.⁵¹⁰ Consequently, on about 29 September 1958, the deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and member of the Central Committee of the CPSU Aleksei Kosygin (1904 - 1980) wrote (presumably to the Interdepartmental Committee on Antarctic Research) a set of instructions outlining the USSR government's view on the question of Soviet Antarctic activities, which will be discussed in this chapter.

Soviet planning and economic organs were instructed to prepare a draft plan for a seven year period, from 1959 to 1965, which was presented to a one day plenum of the Central Committee on 12 November 1959. The plan was approved and later published as 'theses' for a report by the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev (1894 - 1971) to the XXIst Congress of the CPSU (Fig. 43).⁵¹¹ The 'theses' made the ideological point that 'the seven-year plan for the development of the national economy of the USSR for 1959 - 1965 will represent a decisive stage in the creation of the material and technical basis of communism' and emphasised a greater economic competition with the West, particularly the US. An economic victory for the socialist system was seen as a guarantor of world peace and international relations were to be systematically directed towards a peaceful foreign policy, reducing international tensions and strengthening socialism and friendship between the socialist bloc countries.⁵¹² This much more specifically national economic interest, together with the desire for 'peaceful foreign policy', which, at least in relation to Antarctica, was made more likely by the positive experience of international cooperation of the IGY, was becoming apparent when the Soviet government turned its attentions to the future of its activities in the Antarctic.

⁵¹⁰ Boczek, B. 1984. Soviet Union and the Antarctic Treaty. *The American Journal of International Law* 78 (4): 844.

⁵¹¹ Conquest, R. 1961. *Power and Policy in the USSR. The study of Soviet Dynasties*. London: MacMillan and Co Ltd: 360.

⁵¹² *Pravda*, Moscow, 28 January 1959.



Fig. 43. Nikita Khrushchev (<http://www.gopb.ru/library/exhibition/20s.htm>)

At this time, political questions regarding an international regime for Antarctica were very much at the forefront of the Soviet government's Antarctic agenda, as was the desire to maintain a scientific presence in the region. Wolk contends that '[t]here appears little reason to doubt that the motive for the newly found interest in Antarctica is not economic or scientific, but political, especially in view of the region's military and strategic importance in the event of a major conflict with the West.'⁵¹³ The documentary evidence suggests that while the political factor was indeed of primary importance, there is nothing to suggest that the Soviets had any intention of using the Antarctic for military purposes, although they certainly did recognize its strategic significance. They were keenly aware of the fact that the US, by keeping them out of the region and playing a leading role in any international Antarctic regime, would unquestionably gain a strategic and military advantage. Obviously, the militarization of the Antarctic was not ruled out by the American Defense Force. This is shown by the studies conducted in defence educational institutions by military personnel, for example L. Beall's thesis 'Strategic Importance of the Antarctic' submitted to the Air War College (AWC) in April 1959 and H. Croswell's 'Antarctica: Strategic Asset or Political Liability?' submitted to the same institution in May 1958.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹³ Wolk, S. 1958. The basis of Soviet claims in the Antarctic. *Bulletin of the Institute for the Study of the USSR* 5: 48; Sullivan, W. 1957. Antarctica in a Two-Power World. *Foreign Affairs* 36: 154-166.

⁵¹⁴ Mann, E. 1974. *National security policy for the Antarctic*. Alabama: Air University: 88, 90.

Active and extensive Soviet participation in the IGY was, however, making the possibility of excluding the USSR from involvement in any decision making process regarding an international regime for the Antarctic more remote.⁵¹⁵ This reality was now recognized by the US, and its note of 2 May 1958 'to the Foreign Ministers of each of the eleven other countries participating in the IGY activities in Antarctica: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, France, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, the USSR, and the United Kingdom'⁵¹⁶ inviting them to participate in a conference on Antarctica confirmed that the USSR was now being taken seriously as an interested party. The purpose of the conference 'to join together in the conclusion of a treaty' to assure freedom of scientific investigation and 'to ensure that Antarctica be used for peaceful purposes only'⁵¹⁷ was consistent with the desires of the USSR. In its reply of 2 June 1958⁵¹⁸ the USSR agreed in principle with the aims of such a conference and, understandably, accepted the invitation, since this was exactly the outcome that it had been seeking. A discussion of preparations for the Antarctic conference is beyond the scope of this chapter, but a comprehensive and well researched analysis of the events leading up to the US invitation and the progress towards an Antarctic Treaty can be found in Robert Hall's unpublished doctoral dissertation entitled 'International regime formation and leadership: the origins of the Antarctic Treaty.'⁵¹⁹

Intersecting with the US proposal for an Antarctic Conference was the proposal to extend international Antarctic scientific cooperation after the conclusion of the IGY. At previous international scientific gatherings, Soviet scientists had

⁵¹⁵ See Hall, R. 1994. *International Regime Formation and Leadership: The Origins of the Antarctic Treaty*. Thesis. Doctor of Philosophy, University of Tasmania; Gan, I. 2009. 'Will the Russians abandon *Mirny* to the penguins after 1959... or will they stay'? *Polar Record* 45 (233): 167-175.

⁵¹⁶ USA 1958. United States note of 2 May 1958 to eleven countries inviting them to participate in a conference on Antarctica. In: Bush, W. 1982. *Antarctica and International Law. A Collection of interstate and National Documents*, vol 3. London-Rome-New York: Ocean Publications Inc.: 474.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

⁵¹⁸ USSR 1958. Soviet note of 2 June 1958 to the United States accepting the United States invitation to attend an international conference on Antarctica. In: Bush, W. 1982. *Antarctica and International Law. A Collection of inter-state and National Documents*, vol 3. London-Rome-New York: Ocean Publications Inc.: 212-214.

⁵¹⁹ Hall, R. 1994. *International Regime Formation and Leadership: The Origins of the Antarctic Treaty*. Thesis. Doctor of Philosophy, University of Tasmania.

indicated a strong interest in continuing Antarctic research.⁵²⁰ As a result, on 11 July 1958 the USSR Council of Ministers issued a decree according to which the USSR Interdepartmental Committee suggested to the Comité Spécial de l'Année Géophysique Internationale (CSAGI), which was to meet in Moscow from 30 May - 9 August 1958 of that year, to extend the IGY for one year (from 1 January till 31 December 1959). The decree also directed the Minister of the Merchant Fleet, Viktor Bakaev (1902 - 1987), to take into budgetary consideration the new obligations which were taken on by the USSR during the IGY extension. The direction was passed down the line by the acting chief of the Glavsevmorput, Vasiliy Burhanov (1908 - 1982) who wrote to the acting director of the AARI, Pavel Gordienko (1913 - 1982), instructing him to start planning the implementation of the new commitments.⁵²¹ The CSAGI decision to extend the IGY by one year and name it the year of International Geophysical Cooperation (IGC) was seen by the 'official historian of the AARI' Belov,⁵²² as in effect extending research for a period much longer than one year, i.e. until the International Quiet Sun Year of 1964 - 1965.⁵²³ This is significant in that the extension of the IGY and the American proposal for a conference on Antarctica were international developments favourable to Soviet interests. These latest realities now needed to be incorporated into government discussions about new opportunities opening up for Soviet Antarctic strategy, particularly in view of the government's seven year plan which was to be presented at the XXIst Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in early 1959.

8. 1 Kosygin's instructions

In the process of preparing the seven year plan, the deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and member of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Aleksei Kosygin requested the Interdepartmental Committee to 'prepare a

⁵²⁰ Gan, I. 2009. "Will the Russians abandon *Mirny* to the penguins after 1959... or will they stay"? *Polar Record* 45 (233): 167-175.

⁵²¹ Burhanov, V. 1958. I.O. Direktora AANII P. Gordienko, 23 Avgusta 1958 [To the acting Director of the AARI P. Gordienko, 23 August 1958]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

⁵²² Hanessian, J. 1962. A select bibliography of the Polar regions. *Polar area series* II (1): 22.

⁵²³ Belov, M. 1969. Istoriya otkritiya i issledovaniya [History of discovery and exploration]. In: Tolstikov, E. (Ed). *Atlas Antarktiki Tom II [Atlas of Antarctica Vol II]*. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 91.

comprehensive memorandum about our Antarctic operations' which would formulate long term plans for Antarctic research and specify allocations for each year 'at least until 1965'. The memorandum was to:

- indicate what was achieved in 1958; what plans were submitted to international bodies; and what was envisaged for 1959;
- provide a basic outline of long term plans; which stations were to be maintained and which stations wound down; and
- provide information about the operations of other countries in Antarctica and the Sub-Antarctic; their expenditure; and the extent and thrust of their operations.

The committee was also asked to prepare a draft of a decree of the Central Committee of the CPSU on the question of further Antarctic research endorsing the seven-year operations plan as well as 'the long term maintenance of our stations in Antarctica'. The instructions indicated the issues which were to be considered in drafting the memorandum and the decree, and directed that 'this information should be provided to comrade Kosygin within one week, i. e. by the 6 October [1958].'⁵²⁴



Fig. 44. Aleksei Kosygin (<http://www.pravda.ru/photo/report/kosigin-80/0/>)

⁵²⁴ Kosygin, A. 1958. Ukazaniya tovarishcha A.N. Kosygina [Comrade A.N. Kosygin's instructions]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

Kosygin (Fig. 44) was insistent that the key issue to be considered was the Soviet national interest: the Antarctic should not be viewed solely through the prism of Soviet IGY commitments, 'because in the future, operations in Antarctica will have a 60 – 70 per cent bearing on the sovereignty of the Soviet Union and its right to take part in political discussions about the Antarctic.'⁵²⁵ He suggested that the committee, when considering the direction of Antarctic research, should bear in mind 'operations necessary for our nation, irrespective of whether they are part of the IGY program... It is not strictly necessary to fulfil all our IGY commitments. The interests of our own country should be uppermost, whatever other countries may say of us.'⁵²⁶ Kosygin further suggested that Soviet operations should be relocated to ice free areas of exposed rock in locations 'which could be of interest' such as Queen Maud Land and the Bellingshausen Sea coast, particularly since West Germany and Italy were intending to conduct research in Queen Maud Land. Due to the fact that Soviet Antarctic operations had such strong international political ramifications, those responsible for implementing the Soviet Antarctic program were to 'liaise with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding operation plans and the establishment and maintenance of new stations.'⁵²⁷

Joyner asserted that '[s]ince 1958, the Soviet Union has worked steadily to bolster and firm up the legal basis for a claim in Antarctica, if someday that development were to become warranted.'⁵²⁸ That this was indeed the case can be construed from the fact that one of the Soviet aims was to establish bases that covered 'the entire continent' with a view to building up 'a legal basis for a possible future territorial claim. This time it would rest not just on discovery, but on extensive exploratory, scientific and similar activities, which [were spreading] from the initial bases in the Australian sector to all other parts of the continent.'⁵²⁹ Joyner's reasoning was based on post IGY Soviet Antarctic activities, which had 'taken on a

⁵²⁵ Kosygin, A. 1958. Ukazaniya tovarischa A.N. Kosygina [Comrade A.N. Kosygin's instructions]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

⁵²⁶ Ibid.

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Joyner, C. 1991. A comparison of Soviet Arctic and Antarctic politics. In: Brigham, L. *The Soviet Maritime Arctic*. London: Belhaven Press: 296.

⁵²⁹ Boczek, B. 1984. Soviet Union and the Antarctic Treaty. *American Journal of International Law* 78 (4): 842.

multifaceted character through more extensive and enhanced scientific, exploratory and research-related activities throughout the continent.⁵³⁰ Colonel Frank G Klotz, one time Research Fellow at the US National Defense University, considered that, paradoxically, it seemed that the IGY 'gentleman's agreement' between those participants having Antarctic territorial claims and those who had not made a claim (whereby their IGY activities were to have no bearing on any future claims) had in fact given 'the claimants – as well as the United States and the Soviet Union – greater legal ammunition for asserting title to the Antarctic territory.'⁵³¹ To add to this 'legal ammunition', Kosygin urged that Soviet researchers concentrate their attention 'on the applied practical goals of their research: in the first instance to conduct aerial photography of the entire coast in order that the Soviet Union obtain a reliable map of the coastline with its bays, inlets, mountain ranges, submarine contours and the hydrological and biological characteristics of Antarctic waters'.⁵³² The question of mapping the Antarctic continent and its waters was one which was seen by the Soviets as 'reinforcing the leading role of [our] researchers in Antarctic exploration'⁵³³ and, as a consequence, reinforcing any legal rights that may accrue from such exploration. The practical thrust of the proposed activities led Joyner to conclude that the USSR was also motivated by 'the prospects that these multifaceted activities will enhance the Soviet Union's future opportunities in securing access to hard minerals and hydrocarbons in the Antarctic, if indeed any are ever discovered and subsequently developed.'⁵³⁴

Joyner's analysis is probably closer to the mark than Wolk's; Wolk, after all, wrote his paper prior to the Conference on Antarctica and the signing of the Antarctic Treaty, which excluded the possibility of militarisation of the South Polar

⁵³⁰ Joyner, C. 1991. A comparison of Soviet Arctic and Antarctic politics. In: Brigham, L. *The Soviet Maritime Arctic*. London: Belhaven Press: 296.

⁵³¹ Klotz, F. 1990. *America on the Ice. Antarctic Policy Issues*. Washington: National Defence University Press: 30.

⁵³² Kosygin, A. 1958. Ukazaniya tovarischa A.N. Kosygina [Comrade A.N. Kosygin's instructions]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

⁵³³ Lebedev, V. 1960. Spravka o podgotovke atlasa Antarktiki, 8 Avgusta 1960 [Memorandum regarding the preparation of an Antarctic Atlas, 8 August 1960]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2604.

⁵³⁴ Joyner, C. 1991. A comparison of Soviet Arctic and Antarctic politics. In: Brigham, L. *The Soviet Maritime Arctic*. London: Belhaven Press: 297.

region. An article co-written by Vsevolod Polushkin (an engineer from the department of marine expeditions) and Sergei Ushakov (a member of the council for Antarctic research) which appeared in the Soviet magazine *Tekhnika Molodezhi* in March 1956 intimated that if any economically viable mineral or oil deposits were discovered in the Antarctic, there 'is no doubt that they will be developed.'⁵³⁵ Although a note from the chief of the Glavsevmorput Burhanov and deputy chief Tolstikov to the Central Committee of the CPSU criticized the article on the basis that it may lead to a distorted view of Soviet Antarctic policy overseas⁵³⁶ (and resulted in a ban being placed on the dissemination of the magazine) it seems that after the enthusiastic international scientific cooperation of the IGY, the USSR was altering the course of its Antarctic research. Just as prior to the IGY the 'pursuit of expedition objectives that might substantiate national interests were major reasons for exploration activities in Antarctica';⁵³⁷ after the conclusion of the IGY the USSR was realigning its own activities in line with these national interests. The change from 'pure' science to a more practical approach is clearly evident in Kosygin's 'Instructions', which note with approval the whale studies conducted by the Soviet marine expedition.⁵³⁸ Kosygin praises the help rendered to the *Slava* whaling fleet by the expedition ship *Ob* in locating areas with large whale populations and recommends that such close collaboration continue in the future.

More importantly, he emphasizes the necessity of compiling not only geographical, but also geological maps of ice free areas which would identify 'useful resources'. The results of this more practical research were to be used solely for the benefit of the USSR, and for that reason Kosygin displays certain sensitivity about sharing the results of Soviet research with other nations involved in the Antarctic. He suggests that Soviet scientists '[p]ay particular regard to collecting reciprocal data so that our publications contain data equivalent to that received by our country' and

⁵³⁵ Polushkin, V. and S. Ushakov 1956. 44 coprosma pod Antarktide [44 questions about Antarctica]. *Tekhnika Molodezhi* 2 (March) 1956: 8.

⁵³⁶ Burhanov, V. and E. Tolstikov. 1956. V Tsentralny Komitet KPSS tov. Pegovu, 29 Marta 1956. [To the Central Committee of the CPSU, 29 March 1956, attn. comrade Pegov]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki Russian State Economics Archives) File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2584.

⁵³⁷ Smith, P. 1969. Prospects for international cooperation on the moon: the Antarctic analogy. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 25 (7): 36.

⁵³⁸ The Soviet Antarctic expedition (SAE) in 1955 - 1958 consisted of continental and marine components.

raises the question of processing and publishing data 'bearing in mind our international obligations as well as the interests of our country', concluding that 'perhaps we shouldn't publish geological findings and characteristics, especially if we don't receive others' work in return.'⁵³⁹ This policy of *quid pro quo* was more or less consistently applied in the exchange of data with other countries, and on occasion was a source of frustration for other national expeditions attempting to extract information from the Soviets about the research results of their Antarctic programme. However, other countries also applied such a policy in regard to the Soviets when they did not receive equivalent data. For example, the Australian Department of External Affairs reminded Dr. Fred Jacka, chief scientist of the Australian Antarctic Division that '[y]ou will be aware of the Prime Minister's circular memorandum of 1956 relating to exchange with Iron Curtain countries, and the instruction that information may only be transmitted from Australia when there is reciprocal exchange which is equal in value. The evident reluctance of the Russians to meet your request must necessarily result in a curtailment in data supplied by Australia'.⁵⁴⁰

Kosygin had urged Soviet scientists to 'thoroughly research the set-up of similar foreign observatories, expeditions and stations, analyse their operations, review their programmes in relation to ours and apply what is rational in their technology and organization to our observatories and stations.'⁵⁴¹ This, of course, was not an unusual practice for Antarctic researchers of all countries: the Director of the Australian Antarctic programme, Phillip Law also 'asked all members of the [Australian] Expeditions (sic)' to write short reports at the end of a visit to the Soviet *Mirny* station 'on subjects in which they were competent'. Earlier, the Australians had drawn on the experience of the first Soviet traverse into the interior of the continent; the officer in charge of the Australian *Mawson* station in 1957 Keith Mather wrote that the Australians were able 'to draw on Russian experience with

⁵³⁹ Kosygin, A. 1958. Ukazaniya tovarischa A.N. Kosygina [Comrade A.N. Kosygin's instructions]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

⁵⁴⁰ Birch, R. 1961. To Dr. F. Jacka, Antarctic Division, DEA. Exchange with the USSR, 7 March 1961. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia, A1838, 1495/13/5.

⁵⁴¹ Kosygin, A. 1958. Ukazaniya tovarischa A.N. Kosygina [Comrade A.N. Kosygin's instructions]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

long-distance heavy tractor transport on the Antarctic plateau' which 'proved useful when we undertook our inland journey several months later.'⁵⁴² From their side, the Soviets showed interest in the construction of the Australian station which 'was built from light, fireproof alloys and very well equipped.'⁵⁴³

An additional concern for Kosygin was to reduce the substantial government funding required to continue the Soviet presence in the Antarctic. During the IGY, the USSR government placed 'virtually no financial restrictions' on the Soviet Antarctic expedition.⁵⁴⁴ However, the parlous state of Soviet agriculture and the reassessment of economic priorities in the new seven year plan necessitated a tightening of purse strings. The USSR had by that time also embarked on extensive and very expensive research and development of its space program and various types of military ballistic missiles.⁵⁴⁵ In addition, it had resumed nuclear weapons tests after a short hiatus in response to 'a long series of tests' conducted by the US and Great Britain in the summer of 1958,⁵⁴⁶ which measures required a huge government outlay and were considered to have a greater significance for national security than Antarctic scientific research.⁵⁴⁷ Kosygin called for the committee to 'come to the conclusion about the necessity of curtailing the extent of Soviet [Antarctic]

⁵⁴² Mather, K. 1957. ANARE Executive Planning Committee report on USSR Antarctic station at *Mirny*, September 1957. Kingston, Tasmania, Australia: Australian Antarctic Division Library Special Collection; Gan in Press. Towards the great unknown: The Soviets prepare for their thrust into the Antarctic interior. Ohio, USA. Paper prepared for the third SCAR workshop on the history of Antarctic research entitled 'National and transnational agendas in Antarctic Research from the 1950s and beyond', Byrd Polar Research Center, Columbus, Ohio, USA, 25-26 October 2007.

⁵⁴³ Afanasiev, A. 1962. V Ministerstvo Morskogo Flota. Savinovu, 8 Yanvarya 1962 [To the Ministry of the Merchant Fleet. Radiogram to Savinov. 8 January 1962]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives] RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2612.

⁵⁴⁴ Bouchier M. G. M. 1956. For the secretary, Department of External Affairs. Soviet Antarctic Policy, 23 July 1956. Canberra, Australia: National Archives of Australia A1838, 1495/1/9/4 part 4; Gan in Press. Towards the great unknown: The Soviets prepare for their thrust into the Antarctic interior. Ohio, USA. Paper prepared for the third SCAR workshop on the history of Antarctic research entitled 'National and transnational agendas in Antarctic Research from the 1950s and beyond', Byrd Polar Research Center, Columbus, Ohio, USA, 25-26 October 2007.

⁵⁴⁵ Khozikov, V. 2004. *Raketnie bogi Kremliia* [The Kremlin's rocket gods]. Moscow: Yauza Eksmo.

⁵⁴⁶ Sakharov, A. 1990. *Memoirs*. Translation from the Russian by R. Lourie. London: Hutchinson: 207 - 209.

⁵⁴⁷ See also Josephson, P. 2005. *Red Atom. Russia's nuclear power program from Stalin to today*. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg press, 352 p.

operations and the corresponding outlay.⁵⁴⁸ He was quite specific in his recommendations about how this was to be done. The committee was to:

- reconsider the necessity of the USSR's IGY commitment of establishing a station at the Pole of Inaccessibility;
- consider winding up the continental stations and reducing operations at *Mirny* observatory;
- decrease the size of the expedition considerably, possibly to about 145-150 people;
- press ahead with more active seasonal work in the favourable summer period and have fewer people wintering, no more than the Americans (80 – 84 people);
- reconsider the advisability of undertaking a transantarctic traverse;
- change over to air transport in the future with shipping only being used for heavy cargo;
- restrict expenditure on the Antarctic to no more than 50 million roubles for 1959, 45 million roubles for 1960 and 35 million roubles or even 25 million roubles for the following years; and
- transfer Soviet stations intended for closure to Eastern bloc countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia if they were willing to take them.

The interdepartmental committee's reply to Kosygin's instructions were not found in the archives, but by examining the directions that Soviet research was taking in the Antarctic, it is possible to gauge the effect of his instructions on future Soviet Antarctic activity. The interdepartmental committee had already confirmed the Soviet plans at the international CSAGI assembly and associated SCAR meeting in Moscow on 4 - 11 August 1958⁵⁴⁹ prior to receiving Kosygin's instructions. Although the instructions broadly supported the thrust of the plans agreed to by the USSR national committee, they appeared to be steering the scientists to adopt a more frugal and less international slant to their research. However, the scientists, notwithstanding their Communist Party membership and obligation to follow Party

⁵⁴⁸ Kosygin, A. 1958. Ukazaniya tovarischa A.N. Kosygina [Comrade A.N. Kosygin's instructions]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

⁵⁴⁹ See Gan, I. 2009. 'Will the Russians abandon *Mirny* to the penguins after 1959... or will they stay'? *Polar Record* 45 (233): 167-175.

directives, demonstrated no great enthusiasm to curtail research or deviate from their international scientific obligations in the Antarctic. The deputy director of the AARI Somov, who was responsible for Antarctic research shrewdly resisted Kosygin's suggestion to discontinue observations at the inner continental stations by using both scientific and political counterarguments.



Fig. 45. Mikhail Somov (personal collection of Lev Savatyugin).

From the perspective of scientific enquiry, Somov (Fig. 45) argued that *Vostok* station (Fig. 46), which was located at the South Geomagnetic Pole, was 'one the most important locations for studying the geophysical phenomena of our planet' and followed up with the politically fraught observation that its closure 'would be a blow to the prestige of the Soviet Union in Antarctic research, since the USA will continue observations on both its inner continental stations.'⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁵⁰ Somov, M. 1959. Poyasnitelnaya zapiska k planu rabot 5 SAE 1959-1961 [Explanatory note about plans for the fifth SAE 1959-1961] 5 May 1959. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 3759.



Fig. 46. Igor Ruban. At *Vostok* station. Work at temperature -80.
(<http://www.ruban.ru/paintry/38.html>)

He acknowledged the necessity of an extensive geographical and geological investigation of the Antarctic in order to discover areas suitable for future Soviet operations and made the observation that by postponing exploration of the Bellingshausen Sea, the USSR will lose its priority acquired by Bellingshausen's expedition and leave it open for the USA to entrench itself there.⁵⁵¹

Likewise, the national prestige gained in being the first expedition to reach the Pole of Inaccessibility and being true to its international scientific commitments was instrumental in the SAE being able to continue with its formidable task of building an 'official' IGY station and conducting observations in this remotest of locations.⁵⁵² The 'unprecedentedly difficult assault on the Pole of Relative Inaccessibility'⁵⁵³ resulted in opening the station on 14 December 1958 at a location 82° 06' S, 54° 58' E, where meteorological, actinometrical and glaciological observations were conducted for the last two weeks of the IGY (Fig. 47). The fact that the station was actually opened, albeit for a short period of time, and that

⁵⁵¹ Somov, M. 1959. Poyasnitelnaya zapiska k planu rabot 5 SAE 1959-1961 [Explanatory note about plans for the fifth SAE 1959-1961, 5 May 1959. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 3759.

⁵⁵² Avsyuk, Y. 1979. Dvadsat let otkrytiyu Polusa otnositelnoi nedostupnosti Antarktidi [20th Anniversary of the opening of the Antarctic Pole of Inaccessibility station]. (http://www.aari.aq/default_en.html); Bertram, G. 1957. *Antarctica today and tomorrow*. Dunedin: University of Otago: 16; Gordienko, P. and A. Burdikina 1958. Vipiska iz protokola no 10 Zasedaniaya Uchenogo Soveta Arkticheskogo insituta ot 24 Maya 1958 [Excerpt from protocol No. 10 of the Academic Council of the Arctic Research Institute, 24 May 1958]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives] RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595; Tolstikov, E. 1980. *Na polyusah Antarktidi* [On the Poles of Antarctica]. Leningrad: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 122, 127.

⁵⁵³ Savatyugin, L. 2007. *Polus holoda* [Pole of Cold]. Unpublished manuscript (copy in possession of author).

Somov's argument for continuing operations at *Vostok* station ultimately prevailed over Kosygin's suggestions was indicative of the influential role that scientists played in Soviet Antarctic policy.



ОСНОВНОЙ ВЕК СТАНЦИИ ПОЛНОГО НЕДОСТУПНОСТИ.
/ ФОТО В. В. БАБАРИКИНА /

Fig. 47. *Pole of Inaccessibility* station. Photo by V. Babarykin (AAD Library)

8. 2 Impact on further Soviet Antarctic expeditions

Despite the lack of enthusiasm of the scientists for the suggestion to curtail their activities in the Antarctic, Kosygin's instructions could not go unheeded. Prior to the instructions being issued, the acting chief of Glavsevmorput, Burhanov, wrote to the acting director of the AARI, Gordienko, on 23 August 1958, asking him to start planning the implementation of the new international obligations during the 1959 fourth SAE. The fifth Assembly of the CSAGI recommended that all participant countries maintain the same level of research in 1959.⁵⁵⁴ However, on 19 November 1958, immediately prior to the departure of the fourth SAE from Kaliningrad, plans were modified in line with Kosygin's instructions. The director of Glavsevmorput Aleksandr Afanasiev (1903 - 1991) ordered that 'in consideration of the cutbacks of the marine Antarctic expeditions and the reduced manpower of the continental Antarctic expedition', measures be taken to sort through all the

⁵⁵⁴ Burhanov, V. 1958. I.O. Direktora AANII P. Gordienko, 23 Avgusta 1958 [To the acting Director of the AARI P. Gordienko, 23 August 1958]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

equipment, specialized clothing and other materials which were ready to be loaded and return the excess to the AARI for use in the Arctic.⁵⁵⁵ Structural changes had resulted in the expedition no longer having a separate marine component as was the case in the first three expeditions – the marine expedition had now been reduced to an oceanographic unit headed by the partially rehabilitated Buinitskiy on board the *Ob*. Another consequence of the cutbacks was the decommissioning of the *Oasis* station in the Bunger Oasis on 17 November 1958 and its transfer to the Polish Academy of Sciences on 23 January 1959.⁵⁵⁶ Observations were continued on the all-year stations, the coastal *Mirny* and *Vostok* at the South Geomagnetic Pole; *Komsomolskaya* station (used as an intermediate base in the Soviet effort to reach the Pole of Inaccessibility and the South Geomagnetic Pole) was transformed from all-year station to a summer one, and the other intermediate stations *Sovetskaya*, *Pionerskaya* as well as the *Pole of Inaccessibility* station were closed. A new station, *Lazarev* (named in honour Mikhail Lazarev, the second in command of Bellingshausen's Antarctic expedition of 1819 - 1821) in an area previously explored by the Russian expedition which had approached the Antarctic ice shelf as close as 69° 23' S on 16 January 1820, was built in Queen Maud Land on the Princess Astrid Coast close to the Wohlthat Massif and the ice free Schirmacher Oasis at a position 69° 58' S.⁵⁵⁷ It would seem that the intention in building the new station was both to assert priority of discovery and to conduct geological exploration aimed at evaluating the possible economic potential of these mountainous and ice free areas of Antarctica.⁵⁵⁸ Although not all of Kosygin's instructions were implemented by the

⁵⁵⁵ Afanasiev, A. 1958. Meropriyatiya po obespecheniyu zavershayushchih rabot, svyazannih s otpravkoi i pribitiem k mestu naznacheniya 4 kompleksnoi Antarkticheskoi ekspeditsii, 19 Noyabrya 1958 [Measures taken to ensure the completion of work related to the departure and arrival at final destination of the fourth composite Antarctic expedition, 19 November 1958]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

⁵⁵⁶ Lukin, V., N. Kornilov and N. Dmitriev. 2006. *Sovetskiye i Rossiiskie Antarkticheskie ekspeditsii v tsifrah i faktah (1955-2005)* [Soviet and Russian Antarctic Expeditions – facts and figures (1955-2005)]. St Petersburg: AARI: 435.

⁵⁵⁷ USSR 1963. *Trudy SAE. Tom 26. Chetvertaya Kontinentalnaya ekspeditsia 1958-1960* [Annals of the SAE. Vol. 26. The fourth continental expedition 1958-1960]. Leningrad: Morskoi Transport (Marine Transport Press): 219-220.

⁵⁵⁸ USSR. 1958. Plan rabot chetvertoi SAE AANII GSMP MMF SSSR na 1959-1960, 5 Maya 1958 [Plan of the fourth SAE, Glavsevmorput, Ministry of the Merchant Fleet of the USSR, 1959-1960, 5 May 1958]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2595.

fourth SAE of 1958 - 1960 in the year of IGC, they were starting to have a tangible effect.

First explicit mention of the fact that an expedition was being organized in accordance with the seven year plan for Antarctic research (1959 - 1965) is made by Somov in his explanatory note about plans for the fifth SAE, which was to continue and expand Soviet observations in the Antarctic.⁵⁵⁹ He gives an overview of what has been accomplished thus far: a total of two coastal and six inner continental stations were built where meteorological, glaciological and geophysical research was carried out. The two coastal stations, *Mirny* and *Lazarev* and the inner continental station *Vostok* were continuing operations. Somov argues that it was essential for operations at *Mirny* to be kept at their current levels because it was the main Soviet base. The location of *Vostok* at the South Geomagnetic Pole and the fact that the Americans were retaining their inner continental station required that the USSR maintain operations, at its only permanent inner continental station. *Lazarev*, too, should continue operations mainly because it was to be the base for exploring the large ice free areas of Queen Maud Land, as well as being the terminal point of a seismo-glaciological survey route. It was envisioned that *Lazarev* would later become the main base instead of *Mirny*. Half of East Antarctica has been explored by air and a large section of its coastline has been photographed (from 45° to 168 ° E) with geographical, geological and glaciological work being undertaken at various sites on the ground.

Draft plans for the fifth SAE took into account the stipulation of the Minister of the Merchant Fleet, Bakaev, regarding the 'need for wide geographical and geological exploration of Antarctica with the aim of determining regions suitable for further attention of the Soviet Union' by including a geologic/geographic team of eight men who were to conduct reconnaissance work in ice free areas of the continent. The shores of the Bellingshausen Sea were also to be explored using the expedition ship, since reports from the *Slava* whaling fleet in March 1959 had indicated that ice conditions in the area were favourable. Somov conveys a sense of

⁵⁵⁹ Somov, M. 1959. Poyasnitelnaya zapiska k planu rabot 5 SAE 1959-1961, 5 Maya 1959 [Explanatory note about plans for the fifth SAE 1959-1961, 5 May 1959]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 3759.

urgency for exploring the Bellingshausen Sea area, since the Americans had indicated at the SCAR meeting in Canberra on 2 - 6 March 1959 that they too were interested in exploring the same area: the USSR should be there first to shore up its priority of discovery of the area by Bellingshausen's expedition in 1819 - 1821. Somov concludes by noting that after the end of the IGY, 'the range of activities conducted by the SAE has been drastically curtailed': total expenses incurred by the third SAE (1957 - 1959) constituted 83 million roubles and it had a wintering party (excluding the aviation team) of 147 men and 112 summer personnel whereas the fourth SAE (1958 - 1960) incurred expenses of 35 million roubles and had a wintering party of 93 and 30 men during the summer season.⁵⁶⁰ Further significant savings could have been made only by cancelling exploration of the Bellingshausen Sea or closing *Vostok* or *Lazarev*, but the 'impelling need for conducting work in all these areas is evident.'⁵⁶¹

Somov, in his capacity as deputy director of the AARI responsible for Antarctic research, put forward compelling reasons against the financial restrictions imposed by Kosygin, and even attempted to obfuscate the issue of numbers of men who were left to winter in Antarctica. The proposed budget for the fifth SAE (1959 - 1961) was 34 million roubles with a wintering party of 83, although due to the amount of work required to be done by the geology/geography team, which was meant to be seasonal, it was more appropriate that the eight members of the team stay for the winter, thus making the wintering party only two less than the previous year.⁵⁶² The summer seasonal team, however, was reduced to eight (nine according to Savatyugin 2004 and Lukin 2006). 'Further decrease in the complement of the expedition would be inappropriate, since it would not significantly reduce the cost of the expedition, but would substantively affect the extent of observations and damage the prestige of Soviet science and of the Soviet government in general in Antarctic research'. He concludes with the observation that the fifth SAE should continue with

⁵⁶⁰ These figures differ from the ones quoted by Savatyugin in the table below and are different again from those quoted by Lukin, Kornilov and Dmitriev in *Soviet and Russian Antarctic expeditions – Facts and Figures*, published in 2006: 420.

⁵⁶¹ Somov, M. 1959. Poyasnitelnaya zapiska k planu rabot 5 SAE 1959-1961, 5 Maya 1959 [Explanatory note about plans for the fifth SAE 1959-1961, 5 May 1959]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 3759.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

exploration of East Antarctica and begin exploration of West Antarctica 'in order to determine over the next 2 - 3 years the most promising areas for further investigation.'⁵⁶³ Somov continued to push the boundaries of the limits imposed on Antarctic research by the financial restrictions to the point where his draft plans for the sixth SAE (1960 - 1962) were rejected by the deputy director of the Glavsevmorput Tolstikov. Tolstikov wrote that Somov's plans 'according to the new scheme' should have led to a significant reduction in the winter personnel of the expedition and '[o]nly in that case could the plans be considered appropriate for realization.'⁵⁶⁴ Apparently, Somov was also seeking greater freedom in decision making during the expedition, whereby the expedition leaders would develop plans in the field, taking into consideration local Antarctic conditions. Tolstikov advises Somov that, to the contrary, plans should be 'firm, concrete, practicable and worked out by the AARI, the leaders of the Fifth SAE and other interested institutes. In Antarctica, the plans should be strictly adhered to.'⁵⁶⁵

Further evidence that the Soviet Antarctic program was adopting Kosygin's instructions were the plans for trial flights of Il-18 and An-12 aircraft from Moscow to Antarctica with the view of utilizing these aircraft for operational support of the SAE as drafted by the director of the AARI Aleksei Tryoshnikov (1914 - 1991) (Fig. 48, 49, 50, 51).

⁵⁶³ Somov, M. 1959. Poyasnitelnaya zapiska k planu rabot 5 SAE 1959-1961, 5 Maya 1959 [Explanatory note about plans for the fifth SAE 1959-1961, 5 May 1959]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 3759.

⁵⁶⁴ Tolstikov, E. 1960. Somovu, 28 Marta 1960 [To M. Somov, 28 March 1960]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives] RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2704.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.



Fig. 48. Aleksei Tryoshnikov (Personal collection of Lev Savatyugin)



Fig. 49. Ilyushin Il-18 (<http://af1461.livejournal.com/121131.html>)



Fig. 50. Antonov An-12 (<http://www.airshow.ru/photos/an-12.htm>)



Fig. 51. Postal stamp commemorating Moscow-Antarctica flight
(http://www.ivki.ru/kapustin/stempel/page_01.htm)

Both aircraft were to leave Moscow simultaneously in December 1961 carrying equipment and members of a traverse (which was to depart from *Vostok* station) as well as a team of specialists to carry out meteorological, actinometrical and high altitude observations from on board the An-12. On arrival at *Mirny*, the An-12 was to change its landing gear to skis and begin supply flights to *Vostok*, whereas the Il-18 was to return to Moscow with the previous year's wintering party.⁵⁶⁶ These

⁵⁶⁶ Tryoshnikov, A. 1961. Plan probnih poletov v Antarktiku na samolyotah Il 18 i An 12 v sezon XII-1961 – III-1962 [Plan of trial flights to Antarctica of Il 18 and An 12 planes in the XII-1961 – III-1962 season]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2609.

historic Moscow – Antarctica – Moscow flights were viewed by the leader of the seventh SAE Aleksandr Dralkin (1911 - 2007) as a ‘new glorious page in the evolution of Soviet aviation opening up prospects for a permanent air link between the capital of our motherland Moscow with the distant new continent Antarctica.’⁵⁶⁷ Dralkin went on to wish his comrades ‘new remarkable successes in their work for the benefit of the motherland in the name of communism.’⁵⁶⁸

8.3 Conclusion

From the above, we can see that there were both differences and similarities between the Soviet government’s and the Soviet scientists’ view of the thrust of Soviet research in the Antarctic. Several of Kosygin’s instructions were adhered to, others were disregarded:

- All permanent inner continental stations except *Vostok* ceased operations, although operations at *Mirny* were not significantly reduced, which was a compromise solution.
- Whereas the first three SAE had a high number of personnel, only the fifth, sixth and seventh SAE had numbers in line with Kosygin’s instructions as seen in the table below ⁵⁶⁹

SAE number	Summer personnel	Winter personnel	Total personnel
1 SAE 1955-1957	131	92	223
2 SAE 1956-1958	233	190	423
3 SAE 1956-1958	130	185	315
4 SAE 1958-1960	64	113	177
5 SAE 1959-1961	9	129	138
6 SAE 1960-1962	22	115	137
7 SAE 1961-1963	58	83	141

⁵⁶⁷ Dralkin, A. 1962. Radiogramma Afanasievu 03.02.1962 [Radiogramme to Afanasiev 03.02.1962]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2612.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹ Based on Savatyugin, L. 2004. *Rossiiskaya nauka v Antarktike* [Russian science in Antarctica]. Moscow: Gorodets: 31.

- A trial flight directly from Moscow to Antarctica via Tashkent, Delhi, Rangoon, Jakarta, Darwin, Sydney, Christchurch, McMurdo, Bunger Oasis on to *Mirny* and return was accomplished from 15 December 1961 to 2 February 1962 at the beginning of the seventh SAE⁵⁷⁰ as recommended by Kosygin.
- A transantarctic traverse from the intermediate *Komsomolskaya* station to Amundsen Scott base at the South Pole was completed in November 1959 (4th SAE) and a *Mirny* – *Komsomolskaya* – *Vostok* traverse completed in October 1960 (5th SAE), whereby the desire of the scientists prevailed over Kosygin's recommendation.
- Expenditure for the third SAE (1957-1959) was 83 million roubles, reduced to 35 million for the fourth (1958-1960) and Somov's projected costs for the fifth SAE were 34 million roubles⁵⁷¹
- *Oasis* station was transferred to Poland on 23 January 1959 and renamed *Dobrovolski*.

The last two points were also in line with Kosygin's instructions. Clearly, government policy and the associated financial constraints were making it more difficult for the scientists to conduct research in the Antarctic to the extent that they may have wished. Nonetheless, Somov's persuasive line of reasoning had the definite effect of retaining a number of Soviet research initiatives that may otherwise have come to an end.

In August 1961, Antarctic operations 'for the benefit of the motherland in the name of communism' acquired an even more long ranging perspective than Kosygin's seven year plan. Once again, the country's political leaders were preparing for the next Party Congress (the XXIInd), which was held from the 17 to 31 October 1961. In the USSR under Nikita Khrushchev, while 'the business of administration was on the whole left to the machinery of the state, there was no doubt that the

⁵⁷⁰ Savatyugin, L. and M. Preobrazhenskaya 1999. *Rossiiskiy issledovaniya v Antarktike. Tom 1 [Russian research in the Antarctic. Vol 1]*. St Petersburg: Hydrometeoizdat (Hydro meteorological Service Press): 114.

⁵⁷¹ Somov, M. 1959. Poyasnitelnaya zapiska k planu rabot 5 SAE 1959-1961, 5 Maya 1959 [Explanatory note about plans for the fifth SAE 1959-1961, 5 May 1959]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki [Russian State Economics Archives] RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 3759.

direction of policy... fell upon the shoulders of the party.'⁵⁷² This time, the Party was in the process of formulating a program and setting a goal for making a transition from socialism to a fully fledged communist society by the year 1980. 'The current decade (1961-1970) is to be occupied in building the material base for this happy event: in the following decade, by 1980, Soviet society will be approaching communism.'⁵⁷³ Soviet policy on the Antarctic was also addressed in the lead up to the XXIInd Congress. The Interdepartmental Committee of the USSR Academy of Sciences for Antarctic Research submitted new plans for investigations in the Antarctic for a twenty year period, from 1961 to 1980, in accordance with the time frames for attaining the 'happy event' of a communist society where the principle of 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs' will be implemented.

The USSR's Antarctic plans, which were confirmed by the director of Glavsevmorput, Afanasiev, on 11 August 1961, were far less nebulous than the hope for a communist society. In the main, they focussed on scientific studies in the fields of glaciology, hydro and aero meteorology, geophysics and geology. Special note was made of the geological exploration carried out in the area of *Novolazarevskaya* station (its predecessor, *Lazarev*, was built on moving ice and had to be relocated to a more stable site), which had shown promising signs of valuable mineral deposits as well as of the importance of Antarctica for satellite tracking.⁵⁷⁴ On 12 April 1961, Yuri Gagarin became the first man to be propelled into space. Consequently extensive satellite tracking facilities were a high priority for the USSR space program. The plans raised the possibility of regular aircraft flights over the Antarctic continent and merchant ship movements in Sub-Antarctic and Antarctic waters which would require research of a more practical nature to ensure the safety of any such operations. The rapid decline in the numbers of whales in the Southern Ocean put forward research prospects for finding ways of extracting oil directly from other biomasses available in Antarctic waters. Overall, this 'huge expanse of the globe should be studied in as much detail, and as comprehensively as that of other regions

⁵⁷² Schapiro, L. 1963. *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union*. London: Methuen & Co Ltd.: 606.

⁵⁷³ Ibid, 606.

⁵⁷⁴ Tryoshnikov, A. 1961. Plan Sovetskikh issledovaniy v Antarktike 1961-1980. [Plan of Soviet Research in Antarctica in 1961-1980]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2609.

of our planet.⁵⁷⁵ As a result of the ratification of the Antarctic Treaty, this particular region had become a zone of peace, and Soviet participation in international scientific programmes opened the way for developing wide contacts and regular scientific exchange with other countries. In 1963, the administration of the AARI was transferred from Glavsevmorput, which was dissolved in 1964, to the chief administration of the hydrometeorological service under the Council of Ministers of the USSR (now Federal Service of Russia for Hydrometeorology and Monitoring of the Environment - Roshydromet). During the seven year plan of 1959-1965, the Soviet Antarctic programme had in many ways adopted a more nationally focussed direction as demonstrated by the interplay of political and scientific interests outlined above and was ready for a new even longer term phase in its development.

⁵⁷⁵ Tryoshnikov, A. 1961. Plan Sovetskikh issledovaniy v Antarktike 1961-1980. [Plan of Soviet Research in Antarctica in 1961-1980]. Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) RGAE, File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2609.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the motives underlying the Soviet interest in the Antarctic prior to the Antarctic Treaty. It has done so through a framework of analysis provided by Bertram, who identified five chief motives for a state's Antarctic involvement, especially in the immediate post World War II period: the adventurous; the economic; the scientific; the political; and the strategic. Bertram's analysis, although at first glance simplistic, is nonetheless a logical and helpful to understand the interests that countries displayed towards the Antarctic in the post war period. Bertram's motives provided a lens through which Soviet Antarctic endeavours can be examined. A chronological examination of Soviet activities in the Antarctic undertaken in this thesis indicates that all five motives played a role in the Soviet desire to become active in the Antarctic and drove Soviet Antarctic policy. In the particular case of the USSR, the motives constantly fluctuated in relative importance, although, as the thesis makes clear, the predominant one was always the political imperative to gain an ongoing voice in any international decision about a regime for the Antarctic.

The thesis has argued that the USSR had a consistent, long-term policy which gradually intensified and expanded its presence in the South Polar region. The fortuitous acquisition of the Antarctic whaling flotilla, which was handed to the USSR by the Allied Tripartite Commission as war reparations, was the beginning of the Soviet presence in the Antarctic. The Commission recognized that an Antarctic whaling flotilla would be exploited in a manner compatible with its designation. As it turned out, the whaling flotilla's activities were not limited to whaling. One of the flotilla's ships was always given over to a scientific group, with scientists from the All-Union Research Institute of Fishery and Oceanography and the State Oceanographic Institute on board conducting systematic research of the climate, flora, fauna, hydrology and ice. Commencement of these activities in the Southern Ocean directly led to the USSR becoming a signatory of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, which bestowed further legitimacy on a continuing Soviet presence in the Antarctic. Successful operations would furnish the war ravaged USSR with more than increased scientific understanding of the South Polar region and the economic benefits of whale oil, meat and other products of the whaling industry. Its fortuitous insinuation of its presence into the region would

potentially add a greater weight to Soviet attempts to participate in any future negotiations in any arrangements for an international regime for the Antarctic, which was its underlying political motivation.

The thesis demonstrates that from the time of its reaction to the 1948 American proposal for a solution of the 'Antarctic Problem' that attempted to exclude the USSR, the latter has always insisted on a wider international solution to the problem, as outlined in its Memorandum of 7 June 1950. From that time on, the USSR has consistently adhered to this position. It has proactively participated in all major international initiatives involving the Antarctic, such as the IGY, SCAR and IGC. This participation provided it with internationally justifiable opportunities to expand and intensify its long term physical presence on the Antarctic continent, even in areas claimed by other countries, thereby adding greater weight to its opinions in formulating international Antarctic policy. The concurrent Soviet policy of not recognizing any claims and not restricting itself to any specific area of the continent by making a claim gave the USSR the freedom to occupy any location on which it had the desire and the capability to build a base. This policy, however, did not exclude the possibility of a Soviet Antarctic claim. In fact, the Note of the USSR government to the US of 2 June 1958 unambiguously stated that '[t]he Soviet Union reserves all rights based on the discoveries and explorations by Russian navigators and scientists, including the right to present appropriate territorial claims on the Antarctic.'⁵⁷⁶

Soviet Antarctic activities were a matter of concern for countries that had already proclaimed sovereignty over Antarctic territory. Australia, in particular, found itself in a difficult position especially immediately prior to and during the IGY. The USSR intended to establish a primary coastal base on Antarctic territory claimed by Australia, with which it had recently broken diplomatic relations. The latter was most unenthusiastic about the prospect of a Soviet base on the Australian Antarctic Territory, but was unable to voice disapproval without earning international opprobrium for its lack of grace in supporting a fellow IGY participant.

⁵⁷⁶ USSR 1958. Soviet note of 2 June 1958 to the United States accepting the United States invitation to attend an international conference on Antarctica. In: Bush, W. 1982. *Antarctica and International Law. A Collection of inter-state and National Documents*, vol 3. London-Rome-New York: Ocean Publications Inc.: 213.

Not only was it unable to voice disapproval, it was placed in the unenviable position of issuing a half-hearted invitation to the Soviet expedition. A further aggravation to Australian sensitivities was the Soviet decision to name their base *Mirny* (peaceful), in honour of one of Bellingshausen's sloops, which underscored both the Soviet claim to priority of discovery in Antarctica and the peaceful purpose of the Soviet expedition. It comes as no surprise that the Australians officially refused to call the base by name, preferring to refer to it simply as the 'Russian scientific camp in the Australian Antarctic Territory'. Australian lack of enthusiasm for the Soviet presence did not deter the latter from pursuing their course of politically symbolic 'good will visits' to the Australian mainland and to the neighboring New Zealand. In this time of Cold War tensions and unresolved Antarctic claims, the Australian and New Zealand governments were intensely wary of Soviet intentions and barely tolerated these visits by Soviet expeditions. The Soviet scientists, however, played an important role in overcoming political differences through their efforts at international cooperation to fulfil the scientific objectives of the IGY and a number of them developed lasting working relationships with Australian and New Zealand scientists and expedition members.

Initially, the Soviet choice of potential sites for establishing their IGY observatories was governed by the sites' political symbolism and scientific significance. Although the Soviets' first preference was to build a base on the symbolically prestigious geographic South Pole, this option was appropriated by the United States. The alternative option for the Soviets to build on two sites, the Pole of Inaccessibility and the South Geomagnetic Pole, however, provided them with both a significant challenge and the opportunity to earn national prestige by accomplishing their aims in the most difficult and remote locations, a task most observers considered unachievable. The Soviets believed that 'achieving the unachievable' would reinforce the world wide recognition of the leading role of their researchers in Antarctic exploration and, as an added benefit, reinforce any legal rights that may accrue from such exploration.⁵⁷⁷ These rights would rest not just on discovery, but on extensive exploratory, scientific and similar activities. In time, the Soviets intended to establish bases which spread from the initial bases in the Australian sector to all

⁵⁷⁷ Lebedev, V. 1960. Spravka o podgotovke atlasa Antarktiki, 8 Avgusta [Memorandum regarding the preparation of an Antarctic Atlas, 8 August 1960]. Moscow: Rossiiskiy Gosudarstvenniy Archiv Ekonomiki (Russian State Economics Archives) File 9570, op 2, ed hr 2604.

other parts of the continent. Western observers considered that this was done with a view to building up a legal basis for either a possible future territorial claim.

Although Soviet policy was overwhelmingly dictated by the political motive, Bertram contends that there are scientists who appreciate that governments will provide funds for science even though they may not be motivated by science and that there are politicians who fully recognize that political ends may be achieved under a scientific cloak. This thesis shows that the interaction between political and scientific interests helped mould Soviet Antarctic policy during the final months of the IGY when the USSR was planning its post IGY Antarctic programmes, although the two perspectives did not always correspond. The scientists attempted to resist reductions in science funding, whereas the politicians would have liked to obtain maximum political advantage for minimum financial outlay. Compromises were made on both sides, with national prestige being an area where the scientists and the politicians appeared to be in full agreement.

Political considerations and scientific endeavour were closely intertwined with the adventurous motive - curiosity, courage, excitement, the search for knowledge, the desire to be first and the desire to help one's nation. The exploits of Soviet nationals in the Antarctic were a continuation of the accomplishments of the nation's Arctic polar explorers, and the 'myth spun out of them became an important, even central, part of the socialist-realist worldview.'⁵⁷⁸ This sentiment was clearly illustrated in the case of the whaling flotilla by the reception that it received on returning from the Antarctic: '[a]ll the ships in port struck up a deafening chorus of welcoming blasts. The piers, the embankment, the Shevchenko Park, and the adjacent streets as far as the eye could see were thronged - a great mass of people and flowers.'⁵⁷⁹

As for the Soviet Antarctic expeditions, 250 distinguished participants of the first five Soviet Antarctic expeditions 'were rewarded for their services in the scientific investigations of the Antarctic and for courage shown there' at a Kremlin

⁵⁷⁸ McCannon, J. 1998. *Red Arctic. Polar Exploration and the Myth of the North in the Soviet Union, 1932-1939*. N.Y: Oxford University Press: 82.

⁵⁷⁹ Solyanik, A. 1956. *Cruising in the Antarctic. An account of the seventh cruise of the Slava whaling Flotilla*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House: 76.

ceremony on 21st August 1961 by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Leonid Brezhnev.⁵⁸⁰ The timing of the decision to honour these distinguished members of the expeditions was an eloquent sign that all the interconnected motives driving Soviet interest in the Antarctic had achieved the ultimate political goal: the full-blown participation of the USSR in negotiating an international settlement of the Antarctic problem. Symbolically, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR made its decision on precisely the day that all its Antarctic endeavours culminated in a new international Antarctic regime - the 23 June 1961, the day that the Antarctic Treaty came into force.

This thesis has described the practical steps taken by the Soviets to get to the table to negotiate the Antarctic Treaty. It ends at the beginning of a long and complex process fraught with difficulties for all of the twelve states that participated in these negotiations. Although the archives of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 'is not in possession of material' that can be accessed regarding the Antarctic Treaty negotiations and the national strategies that were pursued by the USSR to expand its Antarctic interests, other archives such as the Russian State Archives of Socio – Political History in Moscow (former Central Party Archive) may provide a fertile field for further study.

⁵⁸⁰ Brezhnev, L. and M. Georgadze. 1961. Ukaz Prezidiuma Verhovnogo Soveta SSSR [Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on 23 June 1961. *Informatsionnyy Bulletin Sovetskoi Antarkticheskoi Expeditsii* [Information bulletin of the Soviet Antarctic expedition] 29: 5.

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